Home, fatherhood succession: Three generations of Amrullahs in twentieth-century Indonesia
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Hamka and his father in 1930 (from Ajahku)

H. A. Malik Kariem Amrullah, "Sedjarah Minangkabau dengan Agama Islam," Fort de Kock: Tsamaratoel Ichwan, 1929.

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HOME, FATHERHOOD, SUCCESSION: THREE GENERATIONS OF AMRULLAHS IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY INDONESIA[1]

Jeffrey Hadler

We ask for a thousand pardons . . . We are repeating other people's stories / Their lies are not our responsibility.[2] "Traditional" Minangkabau disclaimers do not hold here. This essay is an attempt to unravel the skein of memories and fiction in Hamka's (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, 1908-1981) self-narrative of the late 1940s and early 1950s. The two primary texts are Hamka's biography of his father and his four-volume autobiography—*Ajahku* and *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*.[3] The young Indonesia was, for

[1] A draft of this paper was first presented at the conference "Reflecting on the Old and New in Modern Indonesia," Arizona State University, June 13, 1997. At various stages it has benefited from thorough readings by Takashi Shiraishi, Benedict Anderson, Anthony Johns, and Audrey Kahin. James Rush, Amrih Widodo, Tamara Loos, Benito Vergara, Peter Vail, and Timothy Barnard have also endured drafts, and provided critiques. Their advice was not always heeded; the errors are entirely my own. I finally thank Deborah Homsher for smoothing some of the lumpier parts of the article.

[2] The ceremonial opening of Minangkabau *kaba*, in Taufik Abdullah, "Some Notes on the Kaba Tjindua Mato: An Example of Minangkabau Traditional Literature," *Indonesia* 9 (April 1970): 4.

[3] Both books have gone through numerous reprintings, and *Ajahku* has been substantially reworked through its four editions. This essay shall rely on the first editions of both texts. Any unspecified reference in parenthetical pagination indicates the first editions of the texts. I shall also refer to Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah as "Hamka," even though at the various stages of his life discussed in this essay he would have been called si Malik, Amka, Buya Hamka, etc. I call *Ajahku* a "biography" because Hamka refers to the text as a "biografie" in the introduction to the first edition. Curiously, this is changed to

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Hamka, a tenuous and dangerous place. It took his considerable skills as a novelist, Islamic scholar, and Minangkabau cultural authority to build a textual raft that would carry him into the new nation. While this essay will not attempt to identify any "lies," it will explore Hamka's very deliberate manipulations of narrative genres often mined uncritically and incautiously by historians. I will also analyze Hamka's work of the 1920s, and set it against the contemporary writings of his father. Both men have been defined by *Ajahku*, the biography Hamka wrote of his own father, and by *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, Hamka's own four-volume autobiography; the characterizations of the texts need to be held up against the extant historical record.

Hamka has not been well-served by scholars, and often it would seem for good reason. In *Ajahku* and *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* he constructs a portrait of himself as a man who is often misguided and callow, forever in the long shadow of his father, Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah (usually referred to as Haji Rasul). So as novelist, he is dismissed: "Hamka cannot be considered a great author by any standards."[4] As politician, he is criticized for having worked closely with the Japanese, actions that exposed him to charges of collaboration. Following the occupation, unable to claim a heroic role in the revolution, he relocated to Jakarta where, "In the fifties and sixties he had turned himself, if not into a religious scholar, at least into a popularizer of Islam."[5] Imprisoned by Sukarno for speaking out against Guided Democracy and the PKI, Hamka was rehabilitated under Suharto as a leader of reformist Islam and head of the *Majelis Ulama*. If the Revolution is the fiery triumph and the *Orde Baru* a grim betrayal in the arc of Indonesian history, then there is apparently little to admire in Hamka's life.

So the most current narrative of Indonesian history—valorizing the Revolution and demonizing the *Orde Baru*—renders Hamka politically unserviceable. This is unfortunate.[6] Hamka was almost certainly the most successful Islamic populist of

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"riwayat hidup" in all subsequent editions. See Hamka, *Ajahku: Riwajat Hidup Dr. Abd. Karim Amrullah dan Perdjuangan Kaum Agama* (Djakarta: Widjaya, 1950). While *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* (*KKH*) is called an "auto-biographi" in later (Malaysian) editions, I do not think Hamka ever used this label. If I use the words autobiography, memoirs, or memories carelessly, it is a reflection of the difficulty of translating genres generally, and working with a strange text specifically. Throughout this essay I use the old-spelling "Ajahku" rather than Ayahku. Spelling in the Malay world is an important historical factor. The transition from Arabic *Jawi* to various cobbled orthographies in the 19th century and finally a "modern" shifting standardization should not be casually glossed. I discuss this in my impending dissertation, and in relation to African-American speech in "Remus Orthography: The History of the Representation of the African-American Voice," *Journal of Folklore Research* 35.2, August 1998. Because of the mercurial nature of Malay spelling, I will not "[sic]" any of the quotes in this essay.

[4] A. Teeuw, *Modern Indonesian Literature*, KITLV TS 10 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), p. 72.

[5] C. W. Watson, "Religion, Nationalism, and the Individual in Modern Indonesian Autobiography: Hamka's Kenang-Kenangan Hidup," in *Variation, Transformation and Meaning: Studies on Indonesian Literatures in Honour of A. Teeuw*, ed. J. J. Ras and S.O. Robson, VKI 144 (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1991), p. 146.

[6] While I am largely in agreement with this historiographical tack, developed most fully at Cornell University, opposing the legitimacy of the *OrBa* should not require the wearing of blinkers. Association does not necessitate guilt. It is also true that Hamka had come under attack from Pramoedya and Lekra for plagiarism in his novel *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*. The debate is remarkable: Hamka's arguing that the Malay world does not have a western concept of authority in many ways anticipated the notion of "orality" popularized in the 1980s. But in today's climate of continued Java- and Pramoedya-worship, the debate only makes Hamka that much more unredeemable. See Junus Amir Hamzah and H. B. Jassin, *Tenggelamnja Kapal Van der Wijck dalam polemik* (Djakarta: Mega Book Store, 1963).

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twentieth-century Indonesia, from his *Tasauuf Modern* of the 1930s to the radio sermons of the 1970s. And although he eagerly cooperated with the Japanese, the image of Hamka as a failed Revolutionary is deliberately loaded into his autobiography and is not borne out in the record of his activities. Sukarno and Hatta were also able to be "collaborators," yet they managed to maintain their reputations as untarnished revolutionaries; association with the Japanese precluded nothing. And while Hamka's son Rusydi reiterates that his father was defamed and despised in Medan (*"ayah dituduh lari dan difitnah serta dibenci"*), he also recalls that back in Minangkabau Hamka worked for the remainder of the Revolution as both the head of the local Muhammadiyah and errant colporteur.[7] *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* and *Ajahku* were written in West Sumatra during this period. When in 1950 Hamka demanded to be read as a failure, political recuperation was still perhaps possible. But Hamka brilliantly, and authoritatively, defames himself in his narratives, and so makes possible a narrative of transformation and redemption.

Born the son of a powerful and respected *ulama*, Hamka never shied from the trappings and fortuities of status. His opportunistic machinations under the Japanese—as described in his own writings, they appear frequently to have been as transparent as they were misguided—certainly cost him a stake in revolutionary glory. And his final triumph as an *ulama*, so closely tied to the rise of the New Order, is tainted with the moral ambiguity that tends to accompany any association with the Suharto regime. The arc of Hamka's life lacked the romance of revolution or the pluck of the "self-made man" he himself admired. No career that peaked under Suharto is ideologically—or narratively—serviceable, and Hamka's arguments with both Suharto and then Kopkamtib-head Sudomo have been forgotten.[8] Yet Hamka was, arguably, the most widely read novelist of his age. He was, until his death in 1981, certainly the most *popular* ulama in the New Order Indonesia. While "Hamka the individual" remains obscure, his writings should be acknowledged as an important source for historians and writers; they have an authoritative place in the work of Taufik Abdullah, Harry Benda, Deliar Noer, and Anthony Reid, among others. It is not the purpose of this essay to redeem Hamka politically or defend the literary merit of his fiction. But because of his perceived failures, Hamka has often been wrongly ignored. He deserves to be recognized as an interesting and important figure in modern Indonesian history.

Hamka and Rasul in Minangkabau

In Hamka's autobiography and fiction recurs a tragic theme: the disruption of childhood and the loss of a childhood home. This thematic preoccupation refers ultimately to an actual event, the divorce of the writer's own parents in 1920. The event

[7] On Medan: "Dia dihina sebagai kolaborator, penjilat, lari malam dan sebagainya. Ini adalah hukum revolusi, revolusi kadang-kadang memakan anaknya sendiri." [He was humiliated, called a collaborator, a bootlicker, absconder, and so forth. This was the way of the revolution, and revolutions sometimes devour their own.] Hamka tells his son that it was as if he had lost his faith, and had committed suicide. See pp. 45, 25. C. W. Watson also points to Hamka's breakdown at the moment of Japanese surrender as the critical event in the text. See "Religion, Nationalism, and the Individual," pp. 154-6.

[8] Hamka clarified the role of the *Majelis Ulama*, and protested against Sudomo's assertion that Indonesians are just "social Muslims." See the appendices in H. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat Buya Prof. Dr. Hamka* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983).

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that Hamka calls "the 'Climax' that would determine the course of his life" (*KKH* 1, p. 49) throws a shadow over his works and days. I will discuss Hamka's "childhood" at length when I discuss *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*. It is illuminating, however, to bear this "climax" in mind at this point, while comparing Hamka's earliest published work of 1929 with contemporary texts by his father.

In 1929 Hamka, recently returned from the hajj, was married. In that same year, he also wrote three books—*Agama dan Perempoean* (Religion and Women), *Sedjarah Minangkabau dengan Agama Islam* (The History of Minangkabau and the Religion of Islam), and *Pembela Islam (Sedjarah Saidina Aboe Bakar)* (Defender of Islam: The History of Our Leader Abu Bakr). I will discuss the first two here, as they explicitly address the role of women as mothers and wives in Minangkabau. This is a key topic in Hamka's biographical and fictional writing, and one that occupied Hamka, I will argue, because he was troubled by his father's own marital practices and the resulting destruction of the family "home."

Hamka's earliest writing is venomous as he lashes out at the customs of West Sumatra and particularly sharp in its critique of the position of women in modern Minangkabau culture.

> Nevertheless in Minangkabau *adat* does not give power to women who wish to progress. *Penghulu*s and *ulama*s really like to have lots of wives, without constraints, so that they might vent their lusts. When he's satisfied the wife is divorced and replaced with a younger one. In short it's common in Minangkabau to have more than one wife, to divorce the old and marry the young; co-wives fighting has become commonplace, and no longer strange.[9]

When he composed this attack, Hamka was living in Padang Panjang. The town had recently experienced two crises: a 1926 earthquake had razed many of the buildings, and Hamka's father had been cast out of his own school by communist-influenced teachers. The political climate was tempestuous, and the reformist Islam of Muhammadiyah was in flux. Even in this milieu, Hamka's "orientalist" attempt to synthesize Eastern and Western is striking. "In the search for progress in this era, there are two bases that people use. Those are the Eastern way and the Western way." Asian culture is good for purifying the soul, claims Hamka, while Europe is good for the knowledge it produces. Hamka praises the Occidental respect for women (the *kaoem isteri*), but he recommends avoiding fashionably untrammeled interactions with them (*"pergaoelan jang tiada berwatas)"*. And while Easterners do have established rights set down for women (*"Menentoekan hak2nya kaoem isteri"*), they tend to jealously block the strides women make (*"Menghambat langkahnja kaoem isteri karena tjemboeroe"*).[10] Other

[9] "Meskipoen begitoe tetapi di Minangkabau 'adat tidak memberi kekoeasaan kepada perempoean boeat bertindak madjoe. Penghoeloe-penghoeloe dan 'oelama-oelama soeka sekali beristeri benjak, dengan tidak memakai atoeran, malah melepaskan nafsoenja. Kalau poeas ditjeraikannja ditoekarnja dengan jang moeda. Pendéknja oemoem di Minangkabau bahwa beristeri lebih dari satoe, bertjerai orang toea berbini moeda, berkelahi bermadoe (sebajan) telah mendjadi satoe hal biasa, tidak gandjil lagi." H.A.M.K. Amrullah, *Sedjarah Minangkabau dengan Agama Islam* (Fort de Kock: Tsamaratoel Ichwan, 1929), p. 33.

[10] "Dalam mentjari kemadjoean dimasa sekarang ini, adalah doea matjam dasar jang dipakai orang. Jaitoe tjara ke Timoeran dan tjara ke Baratan." H. A. M. K. Amrullah, *Agama dan Perempoean* (Padang Pandjang: Boekhandel & Uitgever Dt. Seripado, 1929), especially the section "Timoer dan Barat," pp. 69-70.

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reformist ulama might borrow pedagogy and dress from the Europeans, but to praise even obliquely the position of women in the west was almost heretical.

In a chapter on the Fate of Muslim wives in Indonesia ("*Nasib isteri* Islam Indonesia") Hamka catalogues the sufferings of women: *Kawin Paksa* (forced marriage), *Bermadoe* (co-wife), *Bertjerai* (divorce), and *Kawin Moeda* (child brides). And the newlywed Hamka tellingly decries the failure of true love ("*tjinta soetji*") in recounting the story of an unfortunate man who, forced to become engaged to a village girl while in Mecca, ultimately sacrifices his heart's desire for fear of rebelling against his parents.[11]

Hamka attacks the elite—the *datuk*, *panghulu*, and *ulama*—for exercising their prerogative and casually cycling through wives. For with "poligamy" comes easy divorce, and the vision of hordes of unwanted divorcees (*djanda*):

> Teluk Bayur is a harbor,
> The Dutch come inland in small ships.
> The flowers have wilted the garden's deserted,
> Now no bees will return.[12]

Yet the author is not willing categorically to denounce all *ulama* and their approaches to women. In *Agama dan Perempoean* Hamka cites his father's jawi-script *Cermin Terus* as a source of moral inspiration. The two books, one by the son, the other by the father, resemble each other, each censuring what might be called loose behavior with women. Haji Rasul's *Cermin Terus*, however, shows none of his son's progressive feminism, but rather is a collection of *fatwas* inspired by the activities of Aisyiah (then Aishijah, Muhammadiyah's sister organization). Haji Rasul wrote in 1929, in the *Kitab Cermin Terus*:

> *Improper behavior at home*
>
> Gentlemen! In truth something we do has become habitual although it is absolutely *haram*. I will explain it now so that it is understood. Regarding its practice at home it just seems normal to each of us! That is when we as husband and wife have domestic contact with our wife's sisters—*adiknya* [younger sister] and *kakaknya ipar* [elder sister] are the terms we use. Or the sisters of our mother-in-law—in-laws too we call them. These sorts of affairs are definitely occurring in our *nagari*: so it is when our wife lives in the house of our family—that is our mother's house for matrilineal children and cousins. Doubtless there will be a *mamak* there. A maternal uncle. Nephews and nieces and other relatives! Moreover according to the holy religion, between us and the family of our wife,

[11] That Hamka's own marriage was unhappily arranged for him is made clear in an interview; see Hamka, "Nama Saya: Hamka," *Hamka di Mata Hati Umat*, ed. Nasir Tamara (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1983), pp. 51-2. What's more, Hamka's still-popular 1936 novella, *Di Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah* (Under the Protection of the Ka'bah), is a story of missing fathers and ruined love that is clearly based on his own hajj experience.

[12] Teloek Bajoer Laboehan kapal,
Belanda moedik bersekoetji,
Boenga lajoer keboenlah tinggal,
Tiadalah koembang kembali lagi.
H. A. M. K. Amrullah, *Agama dan Perempoean* (Padang Pandjang: Boekhandel & Uitgever Dt. Seripado, 1929), p. 79. Quotes are from pages 69-81.

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> besides our mother in-law and matriline . . . from our maternal grandmother on down, and besides our own daughters and our adopted daughters . . . everyone else is an outsider and we may marry them after we have divorced our own wife!
>
> So too may our wife and our male relative marry in order to replace us [in case of death]! This is called *sebelah lapik* [dividing or changing the sleeping mat].
>
> (Hence) That which I have called *haram* but has already become habitual, that is the fact that men and women who are not *mukhrim* [*muhrim*, a level of intimate kinship that makes marriage impossible] are usually left alone together in certain place. Namely when we are with someone in the house (for instance) we usually enter a house even when our brother's wife is alone in the house. She is not our woman or our mother in-law. . . or when our brother visits his elder sister's house according to *adat*. While the only person in the house is our wife or some other woman, then this sort of action is clearly *haram* according to all the Islamic authorities.[13]

Haji Rasul was renowned for his narrow view of women's rights. It is curious that Hamka would cite his father's *Cermin Terus* when the text is antithetical to the views presented in *Agama dan Perempoean*. It will be clear, however, that his father's own marital practices prompted the vitriol of Hamka's writings; both in word and by example Hamka sought to recuperate the sort of home and "true love" that both his father and Minangkabau had denied him. From 1929 to 1950 Hamka will attempt to locate an idea of "home" that is independent and stable. He will be forced to substitute Indonesia for Minangkabau, and wife for mother, before he can point to a home of his own.

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[13] "Perbuatan maksiat [bad] dirumah tangga"

"Tuan2 saudara! Demi sesungguhnya adalah satu perbuatan kita yang selalu hari sudah jadi kebiasaan saja padahal ialah perbuatan yang haram semata2. Kita terangkan juga disini supaya diketahui. Sedang tentang menghamalkan [mengamalkan] pulang maklum saja kepada kita sendiri2! Yaitu apabila bercampur gaul kediaman kita laki isteri dengan saudara2nya isteri kita yang perempuan - adiknya - kakaknya ipar namanya bagi kita. Atau saudara2 perempuan dari mertua kandung kita - mertua juga namanya bagi kita. Hal yang begitu rupa sudah mesti adanya didalam negeri kita: begitupun kalau isteri kita tinggal dirumah famili kita yakni rumah ibu kita disanak kemenakan. Tak dapat tiada pula disitu ada mamak kita. Saudara yang laki2. Kemenakan dan lain2 famili! Padahal menurut ketetapan agama suci, antara kita dengan famili isteri kita itu, lain daripada mertua kandung serta indung. Uci [Kamang dialect, maternal grandmother] sampai setinggi2nya, dan lain pula daripada anak kita atau anak dapatan kita semuanya itu orang lain namanya sehingga harus kita nikah dengan mereka sesudah kita bercerai dengan isteri kita!

Begitu pula harus nikah antara isteri kita dengan famili kita yang laki2 tadi yakni mengantikan kita! Sebelah lapik namanya.

(Shadan) Yang saya katakan haram tetapi sudah jadi kebiasaan pada yang dua surah itu, ialah keadaan antara laki2 dan perempuan yang tiada mukhrim itu biasa saja berkhalwat didalam satu tempat. Yakni sama seorang saja diatas rumah itu (jelasnya) kita biasa naik saja keatas rumah padahal saudaranya isteri kita hanya yang dirumah itu incunya. Sedang perempuan kita atau mertua kandung tidak: atau saudara kita laki2 bertandang ke rumah kakaknya namanya menurut adat. Sedang yang diatas rumah cuma isteri kita saja atau seorang perempuan yang lain, maka perbuatan yang serupa itu terang haramnya dengan sepakat segala ulama Islam.

Abdul Karim Amrullah, *Kitab Cermin Terus: Berguna untuk pengurus-penglihat jalan yang lurus*, Fort de Kock: Typ Drukkerij "BAROE," 1929/30. Original in jawi (Arabic Malay), my transliteration, pp. 153-4.

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Context: Pre-1950

Hamka *is* a Minangkabau. In his works, he writes as a Minangkabau, often about Minangkabau. For Hamka and the people of his generation, Minangkabau came to mean something very new. Haji Rasul's Minangkabau was less problematic and easier to slough off. For Rasul, Minangkabau—like everything else—was posited against Islam. His famed reformist battles against Minangkabau *adat* were not tortured rebellions against his childhood culture; they were efforts to purify the Islamic religion. Rasul's concepts of identity were shaped primarily *in* Minangkabau—among people who called themselves Minangkabau—and later in Mecca where he would have been, if not simply a Muslim, then a "Jâwah." For Rasul's generation, the experience of the hajj became a sort of middle passage. The great Dutch Islamicist C. Snouck Hurgronje has described this transitional experience:

> On the sea-voyage, and still more in Mekka Jâwah pilgrims come together from the most remote parts of the Archipelago: their exchange of ideas acquires a deeper significance because their country-folk, settled in Mekka, give them a certain definite lead. In a very mixed Jâwah society, one Javanese settled in Mekka will inquire of the Achèhnese present, as to the progress of events in their home.[14]

Hurgronje claims that Sumatra, while sending many *students* to Mecca, produced only "second rank" teachers.[15] It is possible that this dismissive judgment was prompted by Hurgronje's own vendetta against the Bukittinggi-born Syech Ahmad Chatib, who taught in Mecca from 1876 until his death in 1916 and was the highest ranking religious teacher in his position as Imam of the Shafi'i *madhhab* at the Masjid al-Haram (Mecca mosque). Although as Imam of the Shafi'i school, Ahmad Chatib could not support Muhammad Abduh's reformist appeal, his opposition to the Tariqa Naqshbandiyya and *adat* inheritance laws had a great influence on the Minangkabau reformists.[16] Haji Rasul studied with Ahmad Chatib, residing in Mecca and immersing himself in Islamic learning from 1894-1901, and again 1904-1906.

Hamka followed his father's path and himself made the hajj in 1927, approximately twenty years later, passing first through Jiddah. He mentions that the Dutch consul at the time was Van der Meulen (*KKH1*, p. 86). In *his* memoirs, Meulen recalls that in 1927 "a new type of Indonesian fugitive appeared hiding under pilgrim

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[14] C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century* (London: Luzac & Co., 1931.), p. 245. Hurgronje is describing the mid-1880s, one decade before Hamka's father made the voyage.

[15] Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century*, p. 289.

[16] Deliar Noer, remembering a lecture by Haji Agus Salim, claims that Ahmad Chatib and Snouck Hurgronje were "not on good terms." This might explain Hurgronje's dismissal of the *ulama* in his book. See Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942* (Singapore: OUP, 1973), pp. 31-3. While Noer's book asserts that Chatib was the ranking Imam, it is possible that he was but one of many. The influence of Chatib, as well as the generational politics of West Sumatra, is discussed in Burhanuddin Daya, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: Kasus Sumatera Thawalib*, 2nd. edition (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1995). Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) was a Cairo-based mufti and leader of the modern Islamic reformist movement.

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garb,"[17] and claims that at this time the Middle East became a haven for political refugees fleeing the failed communist rebellions of the previous year. Partly as a result of this diaspora, Mecca, Jiddah, and Cairo were becoming places of publishing and anti-colonial propagandizing; for the Jâwah these were no longer purely destinations of the faithful. Through the 1920s, over 250,000 Indonesian Muslims made the hajj—almost one in one thousand Indonesians.[18] The year 1926-27 (1345 AH) was a record year for the Indonesian hajj; the 52,412 hajis accounted for almost 43 percent of all overseas pilgrims. The *Statistisch jaaroverzicht van Ned. Indië* reports that the number of pilgrims from West Sumatra jumped from 232 in 1926 to 4,273 the following year. Fleeing the Dutch police for the safety of the new Wahhabi regime, so many Minangkabaus were on the lam that in 1928 the Dutch were forced to revise the laws controlling the availability of travel-passports.[19] The political aspect of Hamka's hajj experience far outweighed the religious and social influences that were so important for Rasul's generation. For Hamka, an idea of identity was forged primarily in Sumatra, a place recently and totally transformed by the experience of Dutch colonialism.

The world in which Hamka grew up had already witnessed the Dutch political incorporation of Sumatra and the other Outer Islands (during the 1880s with the rise of plantations) and took for granted a relatively accessible Muslim world (the Suez canal opened in 1869). Hamka was born into a environment of expanding educational possibilities, where a new Dutch Ethical Policy (1901) brought about a drive towards regional decentralization (1903) and an end to the forced cultivation system (1908).[20] J. S. Kahn argues convincingly that 1908—the year of Hamka's birth—was a revolutionary year for Minangkabau. Along with the dissolution of the *cultuurstelsel* and the imposition of a tax and money economy (met with rebellions), Kahn believes that 1908 signaled the beginning of a collaborative effort on the part of Minangkabau *adat* elites, foreign anthropologists, and legal scholars to "constitute" a Minangkabau "golden age" that expedited Dutch administration. Taufik Abdullah has also found evidence that 1908 transformed Minangkabau; both the economy, and demand for

[17] D. van der Meulen, *Don't You Hear The Thunder: A Dutchman's Life Story* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), p. 88. The chapter "Politicians and Educators" in Abdullah's *Schools and Politics* describes a 1920s Cairo dominated by political foment; see pp. 139-154.

[18] William R. Roff, "The Meccan Pilgrimage: Its Meaning for Southeast Asian Islam," in *Islam in Asia II: Southeast and East Asia*, ed. Raphael Israeli and Anthony Johns (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), p. 239.

[19] Jacob Vredenbregt, "The Haddj: Some of Its Features and Functions in Indonesia," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* (*BKI*) 118,1, 1962, pp 90-154. See especially his statistical appendices. It is also possible that the Minangkabaus would have been particularly welcome under the new Saudi regime. In 1923 the soon-to-be-deposed Syarief Husin had singled out and admonished the Minangkabaus living in Mecca, accusing them of being Wahabis and supporters of Muhammad Abduh. See Mahmud Yunus, *Riwayat Hidup Prof. Dr. H. Mahmud Yunus: 10 Pebruari 1899-16 Januari 1982* (Jakarta: Hidakarya Agung, 1982), page 24.

[20] An overview of the Dutch entrenchment of Sumatra can be found in Anthony Reid, *Blood of the People* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979), especially chapter 3. Education is discussed in Taufik Abdullah, "Minangkabau 1900-1927: Preliminary Studies in Social Development," MA Thesis, Cornell University, 1967. Both the Ethical Policy and the process of "decentralization" are treated in the classic Harry Benda, "The Pattern of Administrative Reforms in the Closing Years of Dutch Rule in Indonesia," *Continuity and Change in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale SEAS, 1972). The end of forced cultivation and the imposition of taxes and a money economy on Sumatra's west coast specifically is discussed in J. S. Kahn, "'Tradition,' Matriliny and Change among the Minangkabau," BKI 132.1, 1976.

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education, boomed. By 1887 a rail system linked the coast and the highlands. Padang was becoming a trading center, and had a Malay newspaper as early as 1865.[21] A pamphlet published for the 1915 International Exhibition in San Francisco boasted that by 1887, Sumatra was wired for telegraphs.[22] Technology was supreme; Hamka grew up in a world where identities, "scientific" ideas of race and ethnicity, assumed great significance.

In 1914, an American traveling through the Minangkabau highlands could report, "The people are now taking an intelligent view of their own comparative status among the peoples of the world, and more than one possesses a fair knowledge of ethnology."[23] The same decade witnessed the creation of the *Encyclopaedisch Bureau* (1911) and the *Koloniaal Instituut* (1910); throughout the first decades of this century centers of regional scholarship were established, inciuding institutes for Batak (1908), Minangkabau (1923), and Aceh studies (1924).[24] Ethnicity had long been legislated on the East Coast of Sumatra; in 1877 the government in Batavia required that a portion of the land leased by plantations be set aside for the "autochthonous" population—the Malays, Karo, and Simalungun Bataks. This facilitated Dutch control not oniy of the rest of the land, but the "non-native" population as well.[25]

For non-autochthonous groups like Bataks and Minangkabaus this ethnicized climate bred a racism that was full-blown by the first decades of the twentieth century. Mandailing Bataks out on the East Coast rantau in the 1910s and 1920s dropped their clan names and tried desperately to blend into "Malays."[26] Bataks in cities everywhere had to fight stereotypes. A Batak writing in Batavia in 1914 is summarized by Castles, "The name Batak aroused such unfavorable associations among the natives of the capital (ugly, rough, dirty, stupid) that the Bataks kept their identity secret. If possible

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[21] Taufik Abdullah, "Minangkabau 1900-1927: Preliminary Studies in Social Development," pages 44-8. On journalism specifically, see Ahmat Adam, "The Vernacular Press in Padang, 1865-1913," *Akademika* 7 (July 1975). The rapid economic transformation of Padang is striking. In 1855 the head of the United States "commercial agency" could report, "At Padang there are no Banking or Insurance Companies, so that all financial transactions, are made at Batavia, with the exception of paying for purchases of Coffee from the Government, which are made at Padang." By 1887 the consular officer described a thriving financial district: "Java Bank; Agency Dutch Trading Company; Chartered Bank of India, Australia & China; Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London & China; Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation; New Oriental Bank Corporation Ltd." The US officials were not merely observing these changes; on September 23, 1897 acting vice council C. G. Veth smugly reported to the State Department that consul Boon was arrested for defrauding the Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Company. See Daniel T. Goggin and Ralph E. Huss, eds., "Despatches From United States Consuls in Padang, Sumatra, Netherlands East Indies 1853-1898," National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, Washington, DC: National Archives, 1969.

[22] B. Wieringa, *Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones in Netherlands East India*, Netherlands East-Indian San Francisco Committee, Department of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, Essay #9. Semarang-Soerabaia-Den Haag: Boekh. en Drukkerij v/h G.C.T. v. DORP & C., 1914.

[23] Carrie Chapman Catt, "A Survival of Matriarchy," *Harper's Magazine* (April 1914): 748.

[24] Roy F. Ellen, "The Development of Anthropology and Colonial Policy in the Netherlands: 1800-1960," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 12 (1976): 314.

[25] Michael van Langenberg, "North Sumatra Under Dutch Colonial Rule: Aspects of Structural Change (Part 1)," *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* (*RIMA*) 11,1 (1977): 91. Also Reid, *Blood of the People*, p. 43.

[26] Susan Rodgers, "Angkola Batak Kinship Through Its Oral Literature," PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1978, pp. 80, 131.

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they passed as Minangkabau [*orang Padang*], if not they vaguely answered that they came from overseas [*orang Seberang*]."[27] Because of this sort of ethnic blurring, reliable readings of census documents is impossible. People were hyper-sensitized to who they were, and often had a stake in obscuring that identity.

It would be Medan, and this environment, into which Hamka would emigrate in the 1930s. His escape from Minangkabau proved illusory. When the Japanese finally surrendered Hamka—still inescapably a Minangkabau—would be made to pay dearly for who he was and who he had tried to become.

Hamka's literary milieu was fundamentally different from that of his father. The year 1908 had also witnessed the Young Turk Revolution, and the immediate publication of the (apologetic and defensive) memoirs of powerful public figures. These were quickly translated into Arabic and disseminated.[28] In *his* memoirs, Hamka recalls frequent visits to an "Arab Library" in the early 1930s and lists many of the books he read there. Along with the basic works of Islamic learning, Hamka spends several pages cataloguing the fiction, travel accounts, and memoirs of various Islamic writers, in the process weaving in aspects of their lives that show them to have been what he terms "*kesungguhan sendiri* (self-made man)". Hamka concludes with a recitation of favorite translated European authors that enriched that collection: "Karangan-karangan Goethe, Shakespeare, Guy de Mappassant, Maxim Gorki, Anatole France, Pierre Loti, Charles Bodelaire, Andre Gide, André Maurois, Anton Shukov" (*KKH* 2, pp. 31-2). Hamka himself translated Dumas *fils' La Dame aux Camélias*.[29] These "imported" influences were pervasive, but they certainly were not entirely western product or European-derived. Sumatra was then inundated with global media. Not ouly would new cultural forms come from the Middle East, but Europe was often filtered through Arabic translations.

Cultural production was not entirely a European or Arab affair. Hollywood's presence was magical and situated beyond the control of any colonial administration. After months of rumor and a media blitz, on Friday, March 21, 1930, the first "talkie" was screened at the Deli Bioscoop in Medan: "The Coconuts," starring the Marx Brothers. The American Vice Consul attended opening night, and kept a close watch on audience reaction to undiluted Americana. "The house was packed to capacity. Dutch, British, Americans, Germans, Chinese, Japanese, Malays, Javanese, British Indians, Arabs—every element of North Sumatra's heterogeneous population—was represented in the audience . . . No trace of anti-American feeling was apparent."[30] On June 16, the Oranje Bioscoop also began to show "talkies," and Braddock could report

[27] Lance Castles, "The Political Life of a Sumatran Residency: Tapanuli 1915-1940," PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1972, pp. 181-2.

[28] Bernard Lewis, "First-Person Narrative in the Middle East," in *Middle Eastern Lives*, ed. Martin Kramer (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991), p. 20.

[29] Translated as *Margaretta Gauthier* in 1940. The novel is epistolary, and relies on the conceit of Margaretta's "*catatan peringatan*." Both *Ajahku* and *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* make use of Hamka's father's "*buku catatan*." I suspect that no such book exists.

[30] Daniel M. Braddock, "First Sound Pictures in North Sumatra," Voluntary Report #12, 27 March 1930. Declassified Department of State document File 840.6, pp. 2, 3. The second movie screened was technologically sub-par, and although the Europeans did not mind, the Asian viewers felt "exploited" and protested "vocally." The extreme capacity for assimilating new technology and experience transformed a bedazzled crowd of natives into bitter critics in under a week. (Braddock, March 27, 1930.) I thank Anne Foster for bringing these sources to my attention.

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that a number of "Chinese and natives . . . are now studying English for the sole purpose of being able to enjoy the talkies more."[31] Hamka fondly recalls an infatuation with the movies, slipping away from school as a child to catch the latest picture. In the chapter of *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, "Penonton Film," he remembers as a child watching the silent films of Eddie Polo and Marie Walcamp. Hamka then lists his favorite stars—Emile Jannings, Erich Von Stroheim, Harry Baur, Lon Chaney, Akim Tamiroff, Charles Laughton, Charles Boyer, Henri Fonda, Paul Muni, Paul Lukas, Frederick March, Boris Karloff, Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, Barbara Standwijck . . . and he singles out Charlie Chaplin as a director whose work influenced his own fiction (*KKH2*, p. 52). Along with the Islamic texts, Hamka's work was informed by Hollywood.

Hamka spent the 1930s—his decade of movies and books—traveling through the Indies propagandizing for Muhammadiyah and Islamic reform. In *Kenang-kenangan Hidup 2*, Hamka shows an awareness of a changing "national" language. He recalls noticing the increasing use of new and borrowed words and is frustrated that only a Dutchman—van Ophuysen—has the authority to "mend" the Malay language. (p. 44) He remembers listening to Sukarno on the radio, and the horror of first hearing the word *butuh* used to mean "needs." Sukarno is not attuned to regional differences—fumes Hamka—for a Minangkabau *butuh* would have meant penis. (p. 45) Out on the road proselytizing for his father's organization, Hamka becomes sensitized to regionalisms and "ethnicity," and reports on this process in his autobiography, presenting himself in the third-person as "Bung Hadji" (Brother Haji):

> "What other benefits did Bung Hadji [Hamka] get from all that propagandizing?" we ask.
>
> Bung Hadji answers, "Personally I could pay attention to 'tone,' style and manner expressed in language according to regional influence. If I took a car from Medan to Kabandjahe and it wasn't filled to capacity, then along the way we would be flagged down, held up, and asked for rides. He [again, Hamka] would call out, asking where they wanted to go;
>
> 'Kaban Dja-he!' (emphasis on Dja), I knew this was a Karo Batak.
>
> Flagged down by another, 'Kaban Dja-hee!' I for one knew that this person was a Minangkabau!
>
> And if flagged down by a dapper guy, wearing a necktie, holding a leather bag and looking rather cocky . . . Forced apparently to bum a ride in our car, because there was no other more suitable conveyance, 'Kaban(ng) Dja'he!' (Rather nasalized, like calling Mé-dan, Méé-dan(ng).
>
> I then knew, this person had eaten too much Dutch 'butter'!"
>
> Such is Bung Hadji's answer.
>
> And furthermore before propagandizing, our Bung Hadji had a rather narrow understanding of things. There is nothing as beautiful as Minangkabau adat! Once he spoke before the Bukittinggi Muhammadijah Congress, praising adat; that which doesn't crack in the heat, or rot in the rain! Only Minangkabau is an

[31] Daniel M. Braddock, "Talking Pictures in North Sumatra," June 18, 1930, p. 1.

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"Alam." Isn't it only those people who call their land "Alam Minangkabau?" Do we hear "Alam Djawa" or "Alam Bandjar?"[32]

Traveling through Sumatra, Hamka becomes aware of ethnic differences, and it is within these audible ethnic borders that Hamka begins to generalize "Minangkabau." As a member of Muhammadiyah, Hamka would very likely have been subjected to ethnic pigeon-holing himself. Throughout Tapanuli membership in Muhammadiyah was associated with Minangkabau ethnicity; local Mandailing ulama either refused to join the organization, or established their own Minangkabau-less splinter groups.[33] In 1932, Hamka returned from the National Congress of Muhammadiyah in Makasar and condemned as *kafir* (infidel) the nationalistic polltics of Permi [Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia] and PSII [Partai Sjarikat Islam Indonesia].[34] He was especially offended by Permi's singing of "Indonesia Raja" after the Quranic recitation (bid'ah). But by the late 1930s, Hamka had shifted his fundamentalist line and backed away from his earlier attacks on nationalism as anti-Islamic "exclusivism and chauvinism."[35] The 1930s had allowed Hamka to consider not only what it meant for him to be Minangkabau, but also to formulate Indonesian nationalism (rather than Islam) as an antidote to that ethnicity.[36]

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[32] "'Apakah lagi faedah jang Bung Hadji dapat dalam pengembaraan jang banjak itu?' tanja kita.

"Bung Hadji mendjawab; 'Sajapun dapat memperhatikan 'langgam,' gaja dan lagunja mengutjapkan bahasa menurut pengaruh daerahnja. Kalau saja menumpang auto dari Medan ke Kabandjahe sebelum tjukup muatannja, maka ditengah djalan ada melambaikan tangan, menahan auto itu dan minta menumpang. Dia bersorak menjatakan kemana maksudnja hendak menumpang;

"'Kaban Dja-he!' (ditekannja di Dja), saja tahu ini orang Batak (Karo).

"Melambai pula seorang lagi; 'Kaban Dja-hee!', sajapun ma'lum, orang ini orang Minangkabau!

"Melambai pula orang gagah, pakai dasi, memakai tas kulit dan melihat dengan agak sombong. Dia terpaksa rupanja menumpang auto kami, karena tidak ada auto lain jang lebih lajak ditumpangnja; 'Kaban (ng) Dja'he! (Agak disengaukannja kehidung, sebagai menjebut Mé-dan, dengan Méé-dan (ng).

"Sajapun ma'lum, orang ini terlalu banjak makan 'mentega' Belanda!'

"Demikian djawab Bung Hadji.

"Dan lagi sebelum mengembara, Bung Hadji kita agak sempit pahamnja. Tidak ada jang seindah adat Minangkabau! Pernah dia pidato di Kongres Muhammadijah Bukittinggi, memudji-mudji adat; jang tidak lekang dipanas, tidak lapuk dihudjan! Minangkabau sadjalah jang 'Alam.' Bukankah hanja orang sana jang menamai negerinja 'Alam Minangkabau?' Adakah kita dengar 'Alam Djawa'? atau 'Alam Bendjar'? Hamka, *Kenang-Kenangan Hidup: Djadi Pengarang*, vol. 2 (Djakarta: Gapura, 1951), pp. 46-7.

[33] See Lance Castles, "The Political Life of a Sumatran Residency," p. 233, note 15.

[34] *Permi* was made up of purged Thawalib activists, influenced by Al-Azhar teachings and a radicalized nationalism. *PSII* was also nationalist and politicized. These two groups were considered "most militant" and eventually banned by the colonial administration. Both were led by students of Rasul, and were ideologically opposed by their former teacher. The history of these conflicts is covered in Audrey R. Kahin, "Repression and Regroupment: Religious and Nationalist Organizations in West Sumatra in the 1930s," *Indonesia* 38 (October 1984).

[35] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra (1927-1933)*, CMIP Monograph Series (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1971), pp. 167, 168 nt. 30.

[36] The intellectual and social transformations that shaped Hamka were set in motion long before the 1930s. The most earnest expression of "Sumatran Nationalism" came in 1917, when the Sumatran students at the STOVIA medical school in Batavia formed the Jong Sumatranen Bond "to strengthen the bond between studying Sumatran youth, by driving out all racial feelings [*rassenwaan*] . . . and by posing to each member the inescapable demand that he call himself a Sumatran." Quoting the journal, "Jong-Sumatra," Anthony Reid, "The Identity of 'Sumatra' in History," in *Cultures and Societies of North Sumatra*, ed. Rainer

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Hamka's life in Medan, an ethnically diverse and vibrant city, enabled him to develop a discrete idea of Mingangkabau and then to imagine his liberation from it. Through the 1920s, the population of Medan had soared from 45,200 to 76,600.[37] By the 1930s, Medan and especially Deli had become a grand ethnic carnival, where distance from *adat* strictures and common intermarriage began to create a "new society."[38] Hamka, even while touring for Muhammadiyah, was based in Medan as the editor of the newspaper *Pedoman Masjarakat*, and he wrote the bulk of his fiction while a resident of the city during the 1930s. In the 1930 story "Didjempoet Mamaknja" Hamka's protagonist has escaped Minangkabau, "We were free; we were free from the influence of the family . . . There was no opposition to what we would [like to] do. There was no one to disapprove of my love for my wife."[39] In a 1966 introduction to his 1940 book *Merantau ke Deli*, Hamka would again describe the East Coast as a fantastic place, free of ethnic identity:

> . . . There eventually developed a new generation which was called *anak Deli;* and this *anak Deli* was a bud which blossomed splendidly in the development of the Indonesian people. The father of an *anak Deli* would originate from Mandailing, but his mother was a Minangkabau . . . The outlook of this [new] man was free, and his Malay was fluent, having lost the accents of the place of his ancestors.[40]

For Hamka, the concept of nationalism and of "Indonesia" meant freedom not from the Dutch, but from Minangkabau. In Medan, Hamka learned what it was that he did not want to be.

Medan in the 1930s was a place of limitless possibilities. There one could imagine the promise of 1905's Russo-Japanese War fulfilled: a strong and independent Asia for Asians. In the following decade Hamka, like many, hitched his wagon to the Japanese. Though cooperation of this sort had initially been perceived as support for the liberating Asian army, following the departure of the Japanese and the onset of the revolution, such "cooperation" would come to be judged as "collaboration." In rallies

Carle, Veröffentlichungen des Seminars für Indonesische und Südseesprachen der Universität Hamburg, Band 19 (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1987), p. 31. By the 1930s, Sumatran organizations and the more-pervasive regional organizations had given way to groups that claimed colony-wide scope. "The earlier [1910s and 20s] organizations with regional names were, on closer examination, expressing an embryonic Indonesian nationalism which had not been given ideological elaboration nor subjected to the tests of conflicting ethnic interests and perceptions. The later, broader parties, on the other hand, operated in an environment in which ethnic boundaries were increasingly clearly defined, in which 'the desire not to belong to any other group' had been aroused." Lance Castles, "The Political Life of a Sumatran Residency," p. 173. Hamka, as propagandizer for the Minangkabau-associated Muhammadiyah, would have been sensitized to precisely this contradiction.

[37] From Dutch census data, cited in Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People*, KL: OUP 1979, p. 58.

[38] "The position of Medan as the colonial capital was reflected in the far higher proportion of Europeans and Chinese making up the population compared with other towns. It had changed from a 'melting pot,' where immigrants were expected to conform to a dominant Malay-Muslim culture, to a highly cosmopolitan centre of lasting ethnic diversity and competition." See Michael van Langenberg, "North Sumatra Under Dutch Colonial Rule: Aspects of Structural Change (Part 1)," *RIMA* 11,1 (1977): 103.

[39] Quoted in Nidhi Aeusrivongse, "Fiction as History: A Study of Pre-War Indonesian Novels and Novelists (1920-1942)," PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1976, p. 110. See also pp. 301-2.

[40] Quoted in Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People*, p. 59.

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and writings, Hamka was visibly associated with the Japanese. In *Asia Raya*, (an October 10, 1943, special issue for the *'Id al-Fitr*, feast of the end of fasting), Hamka wrote,

> With regard to the present situation it must be stated that the people have no feelings of trouble. They feel quite at ease with the Japanese, as no force is used to make them do their duties. Nobody from the autochthonous population is forced to join in warfare. This proves Japanese goodness, and for this, people will not forget to pray that Japan may reach the final victory in this war, that our ideal of a common Great East-Asia may be realized. The Japanese military government's respect for religion is clearly to be seen—a thing quite different from former times when there was the Dutch government: they constantly claimed neutrality, but their real attitude can be seen from several ordinances, customary law [adat] and several more impediments designed to hamper the progress of Islam.[41]

Hamka also had his "ethnic" experiences of the 1930s reinforced under the Japanese. Tengku Luckman Sinar—a member of the East Coast *kerajaan* elite that Hamka targeted, recalls bitterly,

> Hamka, a native of West Sumatra, once met the old Sultan of Serdang. He explained to him that he wished to purify the Islamic religion in Sumatra and bring it back to its original state. But the clever Sultan interrupted him, asking: "Where do you come from, Mr. Hamka?" "I am of Minangkabau origin, your Highness," he replied. "If that is the case," the old Sultan said, "would it not be better for you first of ail to purify the Minangkabau matriarchal system, which is contrary to our Muslim law? If you are successful, you might then come back here!"[42]

Sinar calls Hamka not only "a tool of the Japanese" but more tellingly, a "non-native." As member of the "autochthonous" population, Sinar was vexed that a Minangkabau would consistently be appointed to represent Medan.

The 1930s, and then especially the Japanese occupation, threw ethnic tensions and differences in Sumatra into relief. But the presence of a colonial state kept internecine violence in check. These tensions exploded in the (social) revolution(s) that followed the withdrawal of the Japanese; with the thin veil of foreign domination removed, identities and alliances whirled into flux. Michael van Langenberg catalogued the myriad groups whose "futures were being assessed and planned in terms of many interests and identitles, competing and overlapping, represented by politicians, military commanders, civil servants, *lasykar rakyat, pemuda, kerajaan, pergerakan,* moderates, conservatives, Moslems, Christians, Javanese, Malays, Karos, Simalungun Bataks, Tobas, Acehnese, South Tapanuli Bataks, Chinese, Dutch,

[41] C. A. O. van Nieuwenhuijze, *Aspects of Islam in Post-Colonial Indonesia* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve Ltd., 1958), pp. 149-150.

[42] Tengku Luckman Sinar S. H., "The East Coast of Sumatra under the Japanese Heel," *Sumatra Research Bulletin* 1,2 (1972): 41-3.

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Marxists, peasants, wage laborers and traders."[43] Contemporary observers recall and, in *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, Hamka himself reports that at last he fled Medan only to have his house stoned in Minangkabau.

By 1946, Hamka was in danger. This was both an immediate, physical threat, and the frightening possibility that he had been forced from the stream of national history. In the early 1950s, Hamka released both the biography of his father, *Ajahku*, and his own autobiography, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, as a calculated response to these threats. In the biography, Hamka, the author, shifts roles and effectively adopts the position of his father by using this opportunity to teach about the history of Islam, as an *ulama* would.[44] But this shift and inversion is more significant, and crafty. In *Ajahku* Hamka figures a kind of metempsychosis, trading places with his father, and simultaneously liberates himself from his own past and initiates his own final divorce from Minangkabau.

It makes sense that *Ajahku* was written at this time. After all, Hamka's father *had* died, he *was* a great man and founder of Muhammadiyah in West Sumatra; there was a market and a call for his biography. But there are no such obvious reasons for the writing and publication of *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, the autobiography, since Hamka himself was neither glorious nor old; he was in fact at a career low and had no reason to be composing a public memoir. Why did he write *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* when he did? It may well have been because Hamka knew that autobiography was well-suited for absolution; he could learn as much from the Turkish memoirs. But more important, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* was designed to correspond with *Ajahku*. As the following analysis makes clear, Hamka builds into the two texts the means for him to break with his past. In the final pages of both *Ajahku* and *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, Hamka is arriving in Jakarta. His memoirs explicitly address "Sukarno-Hatta," but each text takes pains to associate the relocated *ulama* with a national history. His father's grave in Jakarta provides a new *kampung halaman* (home village) and *Rumah Tunjuk* (House of Indication). Hamka finally has somewhere to point, and he is disassociated from his secular fiction, his politics, his collaboration, and Minangkabau.

1950: Reading Ajahku and Kenang-kenangan Hidup

Only in light of this history of Sumatra—of the politicized, volatile society of Medan and Minangkabau in the 1930s and 1940s—can we read Hamka. This section of the essay, then, is a combined reading of Hamka's two most important secular books—

[43] Michael van Langenberg, "National Revolution in North Sumatra: Sumatera Timur and Tapanuli 1942-1950," vol. 2, PhD Dissertation, University of Sydney, 1976, p. 489. According to Langenberg, inter-ethnic tensions dominated post-independence North Sumatra. See p. 928).

[44] In a generous review of *Ajahku*, Deliar Noer remarks, "Because the second characteristic of the content of that book establishes Hamka no longer as a story teller, but rather as a person who is closer in function to various (Islamic) Colleges in Indonesia, especially if we recall that there are also courses on the history of Islam that are now given (I think, certainly the history of Islam also covers domestic movements and developments)." Deliar Noer, "Pembitjaraan tentang: Buku Ajahku," *Media* 6,4 (1959): 37-39.

"Sebab sifat kedua dari isi bukunja itu menempatkan Hamka bukan lagi sebagai tukang kisah, melainkan sebagai seorang jang dekat pada fungsinja di pelbagai Perguruan Tinggi (Islam) di Indonesia, apalagi bila diingat bahwa ada pula mata-peladjaran sedjarah Islam jang diberikannja (saja pikir, tentulah sedjarah Islam itu meliputi djuga soal gerakan dan perkembangan ditanah air."

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his memoirs (*Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, 1951-52) and the biography of his father (*Ajahku*, 1950).

Published in succession, the texts were composed during the "Indonesian Revolution," a very uncertain time for Hamka. The two books can and should be read as a set; they are artfully constructed key texts that generate a critical reassessment of Hamka's life and works and provide him a certain necessary absolution. With *Ajahku* and *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, Hamka hoped to move beyond the mistakes of his youth and—washed clean—advance into an Indonesia that still demanded a revolutionary purity from its would-be leaders. Hamka runs accessible threads throughout the texts that lead to a very "natural" reading, one that hinges on the figures of both his father, and Minangkabau society. These threads were deliberately constructed to act as cables, making a bridge that would allow Hamka to leave behind his flagging political career and advance toward an imminent role as a national *ulama*.

Indonesianists have conventionally read Indonesian autobiographies as ciphers for an author's local culture. The assumption is simple: no matter how accomplished and wise an adult may be, there will be the ghosts and shadows of childhood that necessarily shape the form of the narrative. Introspective autobiography is a fairly recent import from Europe. The Euro-American is then in the privileged position of being able to "see" aberrations and peculiarities in the Indonesian adaptation of a purely European genre, and from these peculiarities compile a code-book for the specific native culture.[45] Hamka is a man who has proven himself to be a shrewd manipulator of the media—a successful novelist, a popular Islamic scholar, and a powerful (though often ill-starred and opportunistic) politician. When he wrote both his memoirs and the biography of his father, Hamka was undoubtedly aware of the narrative traditions that assume and expect "formative moments."[46] He had good reason to build into these works the threads of a culture-bound, Minangkabau-specific reading that grants him the reprieve of anthropological predetermination. If Hamka is aware of such a potential reading, does it render that reading false? No. In the association of *Ajahku* and *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, Hamka simultaneously crafts and is bound by the sort of "cultural" determinants that are conventionally read as unconscious venting of inescapable truths.

The only serious analysis of *Ajahku* yet published describes the text as a "mythical charter" for Muhammadiyah, and identifies its peculiarities as Islamic and therefore inaccessible to the tools of Western psychobiography. James L. Peacock bemoans both the inattention to "development of personality" and a haphazard

[45] The European origins of novelistic discourse and its move to Asia are discussed in Mary N. Layoun, *Travels of a Genre: The Modern Novel and Ideology*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. For the case of autobiography I am reacting to trend-setting work of the 1970s, specifically Benedict Anderson on the "first" Indonesian autobiography, "A Time of Darkness and a Time of Light" in *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid and David Marr, Asian Studies Association of Australia, Southeast Asia Publication Series #4, Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books, 1979; and Rudolf Mrázek's application of Minangkabau culture, "Tan Malaka: A Political Personality's Structure of Experience," *Indonesia* 14 (October 1972).

[46] As stated above Hamka was an admitted fan of Hollywood movies, as well as European romantic fiction. In 1940, based on an Arabic translation by Syaikh Musthafa Luthfi al-Manfaluthi, Hamka re-translated Alexander Dumas *fils' La Dame aux Camélias* as *Margaretta Gauthier*. Hamka would have been drawn to both the figure of Margaretta, and perhaps also that of the younger Dumas.

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treatment of "the *formative* years" in the biography.[47] While the text might not grind easily through the mill of psychoanalysis, excepting the points where the narrative of *Ajahku* makes contact with the life of Hamka it does conform to traditional Islamic biographical expectations.[48] A combined reading of *Ajahku* and *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* winds towards these points of textual congruity. The following pages offer a reading of the two texts that relies on an audience's traditionalist expectations of Hamka as a Minangkabau; I believe that the threads I follow are very deliberately loaded into the texts by Hamka. In a sense, I will "fall for" this interpretation. Only then can I step back and suggest how Hamka might have assimilated the techniques that would have allowed him to craft such a reading, and why he would have chosen to do so at this particular time.

Peacock finds Hamka in *Ajahku* limited by the traditions of Islamic biography, and certainly this text follows Islamic narrative conventions more closely than does Hamka's autobiography, *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, which lends itself more readily to a consideration of "formative" moments. *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* begins with the house:

> On the shore of lake Maninjau, in a village called Tanah Sirah, in the *nagari* [traditional Minangkabau village grouping] of Sungai Batang, was the house of my parents. I can still remember a house with its four-horned, palm fiber roof, facing the lake, with its back to the East. The yard was not wide, because the house was built on the slope of a hill. Along the sides of the yard, Grandmother had planted white hibiscus, which were always pruned back, to make it easier for my mother to dry clothes (*KKH* 1, p. 7).[49]

In his autobiography, Hamka describes a bathetic Minangkabau childhood, filled with the trappings of "traditional" Minangkabau culture. Hamka's grandmother had only two daughters—the eldest had died in Mecca. So all of the hopes of the grandmother and her five brothers fell on Hamka's mother, who would inherit the family property and would be responsible for the maintenance of a place where the uncles "could receive water if thirsty, rice if hungry." All of Hamka's great-uncles were *adat* chiefs. Even before describing the scene of his birth, Hamka takes pains in setting up the truly "Minangkabau" home and world into which he will be born, "*Dirumah*

[47] James L. Peacock, "Dahlan and Rasul: Indonesian Muslim Reformers," in *The imagination of reality: essays in Southeast Asian coherence systems*, edited by A. L. Becker and Aram A. Yengoyan (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1979), p. 266. Italics in original.

[48] "A tarjama is generally written in the third person, even if autobiographical, suggesting a distancing from self, an appeal to set standards and understandings. The components include a genealogy, an account of formal education and Qur'anic memorization, a list of teachers (often including close relatives, which indicated family support for religious learning), the books and subjects studied, and selections from the subject's poetry, aphorisms, or other contributions to learning. Dates are provided whenever possible, since the ability to date events distinguishes the traditionally educated from the unlearned." Dale F. Eickelman, "Traditional Islamic Learning and Ideas of the Person in the Twentieth Century," in *Middle Eastern Lives: The Practice of Biography and Self-Narrative*, ed. Martin Kramer (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991), p. 39.

[49] "Detepi danau Manindjau, disatu kampung bernama Tanah Sirah, dalam Negeri Sungai Batang, disitulah rumah orang tuaku. Aku masih teringat sebuah rumah atap idjuk bergondjong empat, menghadap kedanau, membelakang ke Timur. Halamannja tidak luas, sebeb rumah itu dilereng bukit. Dipinggir halaman, ditanamkan Andung [nenek perumpunan] bunga-raja putih, jang senantiasa dipangkas, agar mudah bagi ibuku mendjemur kain."

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dimikianlah aku dilahirkan." (p. 8) It is his father who will force a rupture in Hamka's childhood idyll.

Tragedy comes in a passage called "Malang," or "Bad Luck." Bound up in a critique of Minangkabau marriage custom that echoes the vitriol of 1929's *Sedjarah Minangkabau dengan Agama Islam*, Hamka expresses disgust at his father's cycling through wives with each fasting month. "*Ajahnja seorang ahli agama jang terkenal. Tetapi belum dapat melepaskan dirinja dari pada ikatan masjarakat adat dinegerinja.*" (His father was a famous religious scholar. But he had yet to free himself from the ties of society and local adat.) (p. 46) Hamka is furious; in the voice of an adult he rages bitterly against *adat*.[50] Although intimate specifics are not given—accusations against the author's father are couched in a general cultural condemnation—the passage builds to a "*saat* 'Climax' *jang akan menentukan djalan hidup*" (the "Climax" that would determine the course of his life). "Exploding from the mouth of that elder [his grandmother], was a question that was like the cut of a sharp knife on the heart of that child, '*Guru Hadji*!' '*Guru Hadji*!' 'Why are you leaving your children?'" (p. 49) Hamka learns that his father has divorced his mother; at age twelve, "he already knew the meaning of sorrow." (p. 50) According to Minangkabau tradition, if parents divorce, or if the wife dies, the children "remain at the house of their mother and the regular relationship between father and children ceases to be maintained."[51] Where for Hamka, it is *adat* that allows his father to betray his mother, it is Islam that drives his father to break with *adat* over custody of his children:

> His father then calls Hamka over, asking, "'If father divorces your mother, with whom would you live? Who would you follow?" His mouth is locked with tears. He could not answer, because he could not conceive of a life with just his father, not his mother. Or with just mother, not father! (*KKH* 1, p. 50)[52]

Although Hamka accompanies his father, "Because of the influence of the social structure, *adat*, his own father did not feel like his father any more." (*Karena pengaruh susunan masjarakat, adat, ajahnja sendiri dirasanja tidak ajahnja lagi*) Hamka is abandoned, "*Dia adalah 'Anak Tinggal . . . '*" and worse, "It felt like relations with the people of that house had been cut." (*Berasa putuslah pertaliannja dengan orang dalam rumah itu*) (p. 51) Hamka is ripped away from his *Rumah Gadang* (family longhouse). The house becomes a *Rumah Tunjuk*—a term only Hamka uses—at the very moment when it can no longer be pointed to as "home." Although the boy Hamka still sees his mother occasionally, she eventually leaves for Deli to start a new life with a wealthy merchant. Now Hamka

[50] *Adat* refers to "traditional" local laws. It is commonly set in opposition to Islam. Although *adat* would not be unfamiliar to any Indonesian reader, Hamka provides brief essays in both *Ajahku* and *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* on the role of adat in Minangkabau society.

[51] Tsuyoshi Kato, *Matriliny and Migration*, p. 58. Hamka's father was resisting more (or less?) than Minangkabau *adat*. In December 1911 the Dutch Government had codified Minangkabau *adat* law (making regional administration, taxation, and control much easier). Officially, children would "belong to the mother," and the father would have no authority over his children in the house [see *Van Vollenhoven on Indonesian Adat Law*, ed. J. F. Holleman, KITLV TS 20 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), pp. 134-5]. Haji Rasul's action was then as much the stance of an anti-colonialist as an Islamic reformer.

[52] "Lalu kata beliau: 'Djika ajah bertjerai dengan ibumu, dengan siapakah engkau akan tinggal? Siapakah jang akan engkau turutkan?'"... "Sianak tidak dapat mendjawab. Terkuntji mulutnja oleh air matanja. Dia tidak dapat mendjawab, karena dia tidak dapat memikirkan suatu kehidupan hanja dengan ajahnja sadja, tidak dengan ibu. Atau dengan ibu sadja, tidak dengan ajah!" p. 50.

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can only gaze, unwelcome, at the "desolate old house." (p. 52) And by the time he is thirteen years old he is fully detached from the *rumah*; he has become an *"anak tualang"* (wanderer, as opposed to a *perantau*, or out-migrant). (p. 53)

Any reader familiar with Hamka's early fiction cannot help but be struck by these passages from his memoirs. A 1939 short story—"Anak Tinggal"—tells of a boy abandoned by his *perantau* father; eventually the boy's mother receives a notification of divorce from her long-absent husband.[53] The title is echoed in the painful epithet of "Malang," and the associations between this story and the autobiography are enforced with the repetition of certain key phrases. Before the divorce, Hamka's mother would often join her husband at his school in Padang. When asked (and teased) about his absent mother, Hamka answered like the boy in "Anak Tinggal," claiming that she had gone to Padang to buy her son a shirt, *"Ibuku ke Padang membelikan aku badju!"* (p. 14) It is in this same passage of first separation that Hamka finaily drops the intimate *"aku"* for *"dia"*—a more distant, third-person voice. At the end of the short story "Anak Tinggal," the boy slips out into the night—leaving behind his mother and the forlorn house of her abusive second husband—dreaming of Java and an encounter with his real father.

In *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, Hamka's father divorces his wife, and then steals his son—speechless with grief—away from the *Rumah Gadang*. This episode will "determine the course of [Hamka's] life," and we read the reverberations of this moment throughout Hamka's fiction. Short stories like "Anak Tinggal" and "Didjempoet Mamaknja," the novels *Merantaoe ke Deli* and *Tenggelamnja Kapal Van der Wijck* are about—to lesser and greater degrees—the oppression suffered under Minangkabau *adat* and hapless attempts to escape its influence.[54] In *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, Hamka is sure to associate his anger and pain not with Islam (although the divorce is an Islamic ritual, and paternal custody an Islamic law) or even with his father. He names the enemy—it is *Adat* (*KKH* 1, p. 52).

For several reasons, this is important. For one, it shields Hamka from being required to make a more dangerous attack on Islam. Throughout his youth Hamka maintained associations with and propagandized for his father's Muhammadiyah and wrote various theological tracts in support of that organization; with the publication of *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* Hamka was positioning himself as a professional, full-time *ulama*. Hamka is a Muslim and his faith is real. A true break with Islam would have been not only politically impossible, but unthinkable. Secondly, focusing his critiques against *adat* allows the author to avoid initiating an ideological feud with his father and even, to a certain extent, puts him in league with his father, since Haji Rasul was famous for his rigorous opposition to Minangkabau *adat* and his struggle to purify Islam.[55] But perhaps most importantly, Hamka's hostility towards Minangkabau *adat* forced him to formulate in his fiction and his political writings an idea of something uniquely Minangkabau—a construction against which he might rail. As we have seen, the social conditions that allowed Hamka this formulation of Minangkabau were

[53] Hamka, "Anak Tinggal," *Didalam Lembah Kehidupan* (Djakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1939).

[54] These stories are summarized and discussed in both A. Teeuw's *Modern Indonesian Literature*, and Nidhi Aeusrivongse's "Fiction as History."

[55] Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in West Sumatra (1927-1933)*, CMIP Monograph Series (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1971), pp. 13, 70-83.

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specific and new; he was able to think about Minangkabau in ways his father could not thanks to the increasingly volatile, diverse, modern world surrounding him.

Hamka's disorientation unfolds throughout the four volumes of *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*. The narrative inquires repeatedly, "*Kemana dia hendak pergi?*" (*KKH* 1, p. 45). Volume two begins with the mantra, "*Hendak Kemana?*" Hamka uses this device frequently through the first two volumes of his memoirs. Although it explicitly signifies moments of indecision as Hamka faces "career" (author? *ulama?*) choices, it also lends a frenetic and forsaken air to the story of an aging "*anak tualang.*" Hamka is floating; without the lodestone of a *Rumah Tunjuk,* direction is impossible. Volume three—focusing on the Japanese occupation—still asks, "*Bung Hadji kita kemana?*" (*KKH* 3, p. 32), but here the refrain is far less prominent than in any of the other volumes. Hamka has aligned himself with the Japanese occupation, a mistake that will not only cause him to disengage from national history, but be branded a collaborator by the revolution.[56] It is also in volume three that the text of *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* physically and thematically interfaces with *Ajahku.*

Kenang-kenangan Hidup 3: Zaman Djepang brings Hamka to his father's bedside. "*Dalam bulan* Oktober 1943 *surat ajahnja datang menjatakan beliau sakit dan telah ingin hendak bertemu.*" (In October 1943 father's letter arrived saying that he was ill and wanted to meet) (*KKH*3, p. 86) Hamka reaches Jakarta in January 1944 and stays for three months; a brief chapter in *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* describes almost exclusively Hamka's political activities. Here, there is an intertextual shift. The chapter "Berangkat Ketanah Djawa" (Departing for Java) in *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* is cool reportage, while "Ditanah Pembuangan" (In a Land of Exile) in *Ajahku*—once the province of fact, history, and Islamic restraint—becomes empathic and pathetic. The politics so proudly arrayed for display in *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* are in *Ajahku* the butt of Hamka's father's jibes. I would argue that Hamka's reports of his own name-dropping and descriptions of shmoozy politicking are calculated here in *Ajahku.* Every day, as Hamka heads out to glad-hand a name in his luminary catalogue, his father chants, "*Hendak kemana?*" (Where do you want to go?) (*Ajahku,* p. 157). Hamka later overhears his father and (step-) mother chatting amusedly, "'*bertjengkerama bertjakap-tjakap.*'" (Our Malik seems to befriend exclusively great men) (p. 158) The character Hamka (as opposed to the author or narrator, Hamka) swells with pride, and seems oblivious to what is—by his own description—clearly teasing. This too is a function of the chapter's tenuous position relative to *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* and *Ajahku.* We temporarily lose Hamka as an effective and omniscient narrator; his giddy political machinations, coupled with his father's "*Hendak kemana,*" warn the reader that Hamka—son, character, and possibly even narrator—is set on a corrupted course. Thus, the chapter "Tanah Pembuangan" (Land of Exile) is just that: a space removed from its contiguous texts. And behind the curtain of this textual device, Hamka will attempt to slough off a past that would surely prove crippling if he remained tied to it.

[56] At least one scholar reads the moment of Japanese surrender and Indonesian independence as the tragic central moment in *Kenang-kenangan Hidup.* See C. W. Watson, "Religion, Nationalism, and the Individual in Modern Indonesian Autobiography," p. 150. While the label "collaborator" certainly put Hamka at his greatest physical risk, I believe that the memoirs are entirely and necessarily tragic; they are the bundling of Hamka's "youth" and a deliberate move to disjoin the past from the future. There is no effort to extrapolate a heroic future from this unfortunate past.

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Through the months of October and November, 1943, Hamka's father was bedridden. Certain that he is dying, he wired his son in Sumatra and asks him to come to Jakarta. Hamka's father had not left his house, *"Karena sakitnja itu tidaklah dia keluar dari rumah."* (*Ajahku*, p. 154) In this chapter, Hamka relates the most famous and dramatic story about his father: At a Japanese-sponsored conference of *ulama* held earlier that year in Bandung, the religious authorities were required to participate in the *Sei Keirai*—a deep ritual bow in honor of the emperor. All the *ulama* relented except Haji Rasul, who remained standing, uncompromised and exemplary.[57] Because Haji Rasul refused to cooperate with the Japanese, he becomes a trusted and principled leader, and many of the "nationalists" seek his council. Apparently, even Sukarno comes to regard himself as an adopted son of Rasul. (p. 155) Hamka explains, *"Rupanja dizaman itu beliau dengan tidak sadar, telah berpolitik pula!"* (Apparently at that time, without realizing it, he [Rasul] too was politicking!) (p. 155) But Haji Rasul's unimpeachably moral stance only serves to set off his son's pedestrian actions.

Repeating the story of a father's illness and call to his son from page 154, the narrative loops back in time on page 156. Again Hamka receives the letter, again he travels to Jakarta. Now, however, there is a moment of total association and affinity:

> The weather grew clear, the fog lifted from his [Haji Rasul's] spirit, and over time he pulled himself up, changed by the devotion and eventually transformed—joyous at our reunion. The child he had longed for now stood before his eyes as a "man." If I was relaxing somewhere, I knew I was being observed, never free from his eyes. And I soothed his heart. When he was watching me, sometimes I would deliberately look elsewhere, for a while.
>
> We ate together, drank together, I accompanied him wherever he went, I escorted him to the hospital, to the Tanah-Tinggi mosque. (*Ajahku*, p. 157)[58]

Repetition and doublings are a feature of Indonesian, yet their exaggerated (and in the case of *minum-minum* even ungrammatical[59]) place in this passage sets it apart from the rest of the text. Hamka is using the "Tanah Pembuangan" rhetorically to link himself and his father. Hamka then leaves his father, to make a political junket

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[57] Haji Rasul refuses to *Sei Keirei*, and sets a model for Islamic resistance. Compare this to Tengku Luckman Sinar's description of Hamka's role in the sister "All Sumatra and Malaya Islamic Conference" in Singapore. Hamka, representing Deli, initiated a bitter power struggle. "Among the religious groups, Hamka from Muhammadiyah began courting Haji Abdurrahman Shihab from Al Jamitul Washliyah but he failed to attract Al Ittihadiyah. He then formed the *Persatoean Oelama Soematera Timoer* on the same pattern as the Poesa in Acheh. Because he collaborated closely with the Japanese and also advised the Shu Chokan, Hamka became the chairman." See Sinar, "The East Coast of Sumatra under the Japanese Heel," *Sumatra Research Bulletin* 1,2 (1972): 41. In *Ajahku*, Hamka mentions the Singapore meeting at which all the *ulama* performed the *Sei Keirei*. Resistance was discussed, "But no one dared" [Tetapi tidak ada jang berani], p. 151.

[58] "Tjuatja kian lama kian terang, kabut dari rasa terharu, kian lama kian menjentak naik dan berganti dengan kasih mesra dan lama-lama mendjelma mendjadi kegembiraan karena pertemuan kembali. Anak jang diharap-harapkan akan mendjadi 'orang' sudah ada dihadapan mata. Djika saja melengah ketempat lain, saja tahu, saja dilihatnja tenang-tenang, tidak lepas-lepas dari matanja. Dan saja puaskan hatinja. Djika dia menilik-nilik saja itu, kadang^2 saja sengadja menengok ketempat lain, lama-lama.

"Makan bersama-sama, minum-minum bersama-sama, saja iringkan dia kemana pergi, saja antarkan dia kerumah sakit, kemesdjid Tanah-Tinggi." p. 157.

[59] *"Minum-minum"* appears only in the first edition; it is changed to *"minum"* in newer editions.

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around Java. In Bandung he suffers a severe attack of malaria. The recovery is temporary, and back in Jakarta Hamka has a relapse and is comatose. His father, saddened, is afraid that Hamka will die.

> Of the six [remaining children], I was the only one who in his view could inherit the struggle for the maintenance of religion which he would leave behind. And now I was seriously ill. He was visibly worried! Then he said, "How is this, Darijah. Has he been ordered by God to come here in order to die before our very eyes? How is this, Darijah, that I, who have been so seriously ill for so long, ordered him to come here so that he could close my eyes when the soul separated from my body, why is it that the reverse will take place!" (*Ajahku*, p. 158)[60]

With a deft stroke, Hamka enforces the affinity between the two men. The tenuous fluctuation between father and son is potentially deadly; in the shifting *Tanah Pembuangan*, conversions are indeed possible. We also learn that Hamka's father expects his son to assume the mantle of *ulama*, a transfer that *requires* the father's death. Haji Rasul uses the allusive idiom "njawa *bertjerai* dengan badan" (the soul separates from the body), evoking not only mortality, but separation (of father and son), and even divorce.

Hamka slowly recovers, and allows himself to slip back into the routine of a child. He shares a bedroom with his brother and is woken for prayer every morning by his father. It is a wonderful life, but adult responsibilities prevent him from following his heart.

> If I felt the beauty and comfort of that religious life, then in no way could I return to my father, but rather remove him to my own household, that I had built according to his wishes.
>
> Thus, there was a time for arriving and a time for departing. (*Ajahku*, p. 159)[61]

Here *Ajahku* begins to point towards that recurring theme of *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*—the loss and reconstruction of Hamka's *Rumah Tunjuk*. Hamka is stymied. His father's house in Jakarta, with his father rooted there by illness, has the attraction of a stable childhood home. But Hamka is still bound to Minangkabau and cannot conceive of a "home" in Jakarta. Hamka must return to Sumatra, and he dreams of establishing his father in a new household. But this perversion—a motherless *Rumah Tunjuk*—is impossible. Now Hamka recalls the purpose of his mission to Java; he was sent by the Islamic community in Minangkabau to convince his exiled father to return home. Again Hamka breaks with the progressive chronology of his narrative and eddies back to the first conversation with his father upon arrival in Java. It is a telling disruption.

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[60] "Dalam jang berenam itu hanja saja jang dipandangnja dapat menerima warisan perdjuangan menegakkan agama jang akan ditinggalkannja. Sekarang saja sakit keras itu. Beliau kelihatan gelisah! Sampai dia berkata; 'Bagaimana ini Djarijah. Apakah dia disuruh Tuhan kemari buat mati dihadapan kita? Bagaimana ini Djarijah, saja jang sakit keras selama ini dan dia jang saja pesankan buat menutupkan mata saja setelah njawa bertjerai dengan badan, kenapa sebaliknja jang akan terdjadi!'" *Ajahku*, p. 158.

[61] "Kalau saja merasa indah ni'mat kehidupan dalam agama itu, bukanlah saja mesti kembali kepada ajah, tetapi memindahkannja pula kedalam rumah tanggaku sendiri, jang telah kudirikan karena kehendak beliau."

"Sebab itu, ada masanja datang dan ada masanja pergi." p. 159.

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I had only just set foot on Java, when I immediately brought the matter up. First, I tried to ascertain his own feelings. I asked him, "Father! Where do you feel contented? Where would you spend your golden years?" If you're ready to go home, then know that my coming here is to bring the message and fulfill the mission of the Minangkabau *ulama*—I am to bring you back. Plenty of money has been collected to cover the trip. But if you would live more peacefully here on Java, then as your son, a child may not betray the wishes of a parent.

He answered: "If this is your message, then I too will be brief. If your coming here to fetch me was the wishes of a son, then I would be bound to return home with you. But if given my druthers, I would be pleased to remain here on Java. Primarily, here there are plenty of doctors and medicine to treat my illness! As for a place of residence, for me there's no difference between [the earth of] Java and Minangkabau, or anywhere else in the world. My homeland is any piece of earth where I can bow my head in supplication to God."

I answered: "But the anxieties of your family remain, if you shut your eyes forever here in Java!"

"These anxieties have neither a rational basis nor a link to the designs of Allah. People die where they die. There is no grandeur or superiority in dying in your native village rather than Java. Only one thing matters—that there is a plot of land for a grave, and it is ready to receive us." (*Ajahku*, p. 160)[62]

To Hamka's dismay, his father sees nothing exceptional in Minangkabau. Had Hamka approached him as a son, rather than a representative of the place, Haji Rasul would have returned. Now it is impossible for Hamka to realize a Minangkabau *Rumah Tunjuk*, impossible for him to visit the grave of a parent in his "home village."[63] Haji Rasul—true to form—takes a strict Islamic line against such regional allegiances. His son had learned very different ideas of Minangkabau "ethnicity." An early hatred

[62] "Baru sadja kaki saja mengindjak tanah Djawa, hal itu telah saja urus. Lebih dahulu saja selami djiwa beliau sendiri. Saja berkata kepadanja; 'Abuja! Dimana hati Buja jang senang? Demanakah hari tua jang tenteram? Djika Abuja sudi pulang, maka kedatangan anakanda kemari, adalah pula membawa suara dan sebagai utusan daripada ulama-ulama Minangkabau mendjeput Buja. Ongkos pulang telah diberikan setjukup-tjukupnja. Tetapi djika Buja lebih tenteram rasanja di tanah Djawa ini, maka sebagai putera, anakanda tidak boleh mendurhaka orang tua dengan melawan kehendaknja.'

"Beliau mendjawab; 'Djika begitu perkataanmu, bagiku pun pendek pula. Kalau kedatanganmu kemari mendjeputku sebagai kehendak anak, maka aku akan pulang dan menurut dengan patuh. Tetapi djika diberi kebebasan, senang rasanja hatiku ditanah Djawa ini. Terutama dokter tjukup dan obat tjukup untuk menjelenggarakan sakitku! Adapun perkara tempat tinggal, bagiku sama sadja diantara tanah Djawa dan Minangkabau, atau dunia mana sekalipun. Tanah air-ku ialah setiap djenkal tanah jang disana aku masih dapat mentjetjahkan keningku sudjud ke Tuhan.'

"Saja mendjawab: 'Tetapi masih was-was keluarga, djika Buja menutup mata ditanah Djawa ini!'

"'Itu hanjalah was-was jang tidak berdasar ilmu dan tidak bertali dengan kemauan Allah. Dimana sadja manusia akan mati. Dan tidak ada kelebihannja atau keutamaannja mati dikampung atau mati di Djawa. Jang penting adalah suatu perkara, jaitu adakah tanah tempat kita akan dikuburkan itu, sudi menerima kita karena amalan kita jang saleh?'"

[63] Apparently, the conflict over burial is common. Islam demands adherence to the wishes (wasiat) of the deceased for a speedy, local burial. Adat, however, requires interment in the home village. See Kato, *Matriliny and Migration*, p. 213.

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of *adat*, coupled with the changed world with which he interacted, had made these new formulations possible.

Hamka must return to Medan. As he passes from the "Tanah Pembuangan" and is again separated (*bertjerai*) from his father, his narrative confidence is restored. Detached from his father, and his father's house, Hamka can "see" into his father's emotions. The description of Hamka's departure—at the train station he relinquishes his father to Sukarno—is rife with many of Hamka's empathic insights.

> In early April, 1944, I set the date for my return home. Since mentioning that I would be leaving, one could see his spiritual struggle. The pain of separation from his son was visible on his face, yet one could also see his efforts to assuage those feelings. (*Ajahku*, p. 161)[64]

Hamka claims to have spent the following months in Medan resisting any tendency to drift too close to the Japanese. However, he admits that he almost returned to Java in February, 1945, at the behest of Sukarno (then head of the Java *Hokokai*). But, *sayang*, he could not go, because he was advisor for religious affairs to the *Tyokan* (Governor) of East Sumatra. Then, several months later, Hamka becomes a member of the Japanese Tyuo Sangi In advisory council in Sumatra. (p. 162) He receives a final letter from his father, "*Setengah daripada isi surat itu ialah sjair Arab:*" (Half of that letter was an Arabic syair) (*Ajahku*, p. 163)

> Walaa tasal 'amma djara kaifa djara
> Fa kullu sjai-in bi qadha-in wa qudar
> (Do not keep asking,
> why things turned out this way
> All is the will of God
> By destiny all has been determined)
> "Be devoted to Allah, my child! Have courage, child, have courage! . . . "[65]

These are the final words of *Tanah Pembuangan*. Hamka never sees his father alive again. When this letter reemerges in *Kenang-kenangan Hidup 3*, Hamka is filled with prescient misgivings about his career in the Japanese administration.

> People were puzzled—why now was he clearly unhappy? Why were his *syair* taking this form? As for a reason he behaved so, it can be seen in the weight of the "set course in life" that had to be endured: "What's done is done!" There was no turning back. He was at the "summit," but it was only visible from a distance. The portion of all that glory he had been granted was just "binds" on the freedom of his spirit. Moreover, forty days before he became a member of the Tyuo Sangi In [Japanese Advisory Council], his father had died in exile. Ringing in his ears were his words: "Know this, Malik, how must we face this world?

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[64] "Diawal bulan April 1944 saja tentukanlah hari akan pulang. Sedjak tersebut saja akan berangkat, kelihatanlah perdjuangan batin beliau. Nampak muram mukanja akan bertjerai dengan putera, tetapi kelihatan pula usahanja melipur perasaan itu." *Ajahku*, p. 161.

[65] (Djanganlah engkau banjak bertanja, / apakah sebab djadi begitu / Semua kehendak dari Tuhannja / Didalam takdir sudahlah tentu) "Ittaqil Laha ja Waladi = Taqwalah kepada Allah, hai anakku! Asstabat, ja Waladi asstabat!—Teguhkan hatimu, anak, teguhkan hatimu!.....'" *Ajahku*, p. 163.

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> "(This world adheres to the heart and turns us from the truth). If the world is not brought into the heart, but rather is left outside, and we are not turned from the truth, then there is nothing threatening in the world."[66]

Hamka assumes the wisdom of his father, but it is too late. At best, Hamka can only shore up for the inevitable, and for him tragic, moment of Indonesian independence.

All the "success" and honor Hamka received under the Japanese built a wall blocking him from revolutionary glory. In *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*, the letter from his father does not trail off elliptically; here the narrative—and history—must progress.

> He remembered one of his father's letters, (Have courage my child, persevere. And devote yourself to Allah, wherever you are!)
>
> People respected him, but his heart questioned. What is this work I'm doing? Does this fit with the wishes of my soul? Ah, what's the use! Don't be afraid of heights, an acrophobe will be killed in a fall! Cowards lose their faith! Aren't others this way too? (*KKH* 3, pages 129-30)[67]

Hamka steels himself, and prepares to face the consequences of venal association. During the final months of the Japanese occupation, when it is clear that Japan is faltering, the elite became vulnerable and open to charges of collaboration.[68] On August 24, Hamka accepted the car of his patron Nakashima, and fled Medan, panicking. He tried to regroup in his Minangkabau village (*kekampung halaman*), but returned to Medan in September. A contemporary remembers that his "good friend" Hamka fled to Minangkabau following the Proclamation of Independence, only to be labeled a collaborator and have his house stoned.[69] The *Rumah Adat*—an ultimate haven for its affiliates—could provide no shelter for Hamka. He will again become an

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66 "Orang heran, mengapa pada waktu itu dia kelihatan kurang gembira. Mengapa sja'irnja demikian rupa? Adapun sebabnja maka dia bersikap demikian, adalah melihat beratnja 'lakon' jang harus didjalankan: 'Langkah telah terlangkahkan!' Tidak dapat surut lagi. Dia telah di 'puntjak,' tetapi hanjah nampak dari luar. Baginja segala kemegahan jang diberikan itu hanjalah 'ikatan' belaka atas kebebasan djiwanja. Apatah lagi, empat puluh hari sebelum dia duduk djadi anggota Tyuo Sangi In itu, ajahnja telah meninggal dunia di pembuangan. Terdenging-denging ditelinganja perkataan beliau: 'Tahukah engkau Malik, bagaimana harusnja kita menghadapi dunia ini? *"Addunja ma danaa min 'al qalbi, wasjagala 'ani lhaqqi."*

"'(Dunia ialah jang lekat kehati dan memalingkan kita dari pada kebenaran). Djika dunia tidak dimasukkan kehati, melainkan ditinggalkan sadja diluar hati, dan kita tidak berpaling dari kebenaran, tidaklah membahajakan dunia itu.'

67 "Dia ingat salah satu isi surat ajahnja; 'Asts-tsabatu ja waladi ats-tsabatu; Wattaqil Laha haisu ma kunta!' (Teguhkan nian hatimu ja anakku, teguhkan nian. Dan taqwalah kepada Allah, dimana sadja engkau ada!)

"Orang menghormati dia, tetapi hatinja berkata. Apakah pekerdjaan jang kukerdjakan ini? Adakah ini sesuai dengan kehendak batinku? Ah, tidak apa! Djangan terlalu penggamang, orang penggamang mati djatuh! Orang pentjemas tanggal iman! Bukankah orang lain begitu pula?" [129-130]

68 "Hamka found himself an object of popular hatred, as a member of the favored élite being groomed for 'independence,' when he held a lavish feast for his son's circumcision amid the surrounding starvation." Reid, *The Blood of the People*, p. 136.

69 H. Mohammed Said, "What Was The 'Social Revolution of 1946' In East Sumatra?" *Indonesia* 15 (April 1973): 160.

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anak tualang—expelled from Medan, uncertain in Minangkabau—before he can attempt to build a spiritual *rumah* for himself and his family.

Houses and Indications

So far this essay has relied on an idea of *Rumah Tunjuk* that I claim is unique to Hamka. Yet recent scholarship on Minangkabau generally groups *tunjuk* as just one of a set of synonyms for the traditional Minangkabau home. Rudolf Mrázek's recent biography of Sutan Sjahrir follows Tsuyoshi Kato in describing the physical locus of Minangkabau matriliny—commonly called a *Rumah Gadang* or *Rumah Adat* (Great House or Adat House)—as a *Rumah Tunjuk*, or house of indication.[70] But both refer ultimately to a 1968 essay by Hamka that is a mixed defense of *adat* and a peculiar apologia for earlier attacks on Minangkabau culture:

> The splendor of Minangkabau *Adat* is in its system of property inheritance. Inheritance that is called Great Inheritance, that is passed down from one's ancestors, and is expressed in the proverbs of *Adat* . . . "When close that which can be touched, when distant that which can be pointed to."[71]

Hamka's choice of aphorism is telling—for him the importance of the *Rumah Gadang* is its function as a *Rumah Tunjuk*. Following Hamka, scholarship has grouped *rumah tunjuk* with *gadang* and *adat* as a pervasive, Minangkabau designation. Yet the notion of a *Rumah Tunjuk* and fears of misdirection are Hamka's personal obsession and, in part, were Hamka's invention; Hamka had no place in Minangkabau where he might point to as "home." I have not found a single source—Minangkabau or foreign, *tambo* or contemporary—other than Hamka that makes even the scantiest reference to a *Rumah Tunjuk*.

This 1968 article "Adat Minangkabau dan Harta Pusakanja" cites an earlier pamphlet by Hamka—a focused 1946 attack on Minangkabau *adat*, entitled *Adat Minangkabau Menghadapi Revolusi* (Minangkabau Adat Faces a Revolution), that haunted him through the revolution. In it, he maintained that *adat* was not simply outmoded, but needed to be scrapped for a system that better conformed to Islam. Arguing in favor of patriliny, he twists a traditional Minangkabau aphorism and then makes the biting declaration that Minangkabau *adat*, like any fossil, belongs in a museum.[72] Two decades later, in "Adat Minangkabau dan Harta Pusakanja," he recalls

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[70] Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjahrir: Politics and Exile in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1994), p. 6. Tsuyoshi Kato, *Matriliny and Migration: Evolving Minangkabau Traditions in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 61.

[71] "Keelokan Adat Minangkabau ialah pada susunan harta pusaka itu. Pusaka jang dinamai Pusaka Tinggi, jang diterima turun temurun dari nenek-mojang, jang diungkapkan dalam pepatah Adat"... "Dakek nan bulieh di kakok, djaueh nan bulieh ditundjuek." Hamka, "Adat Minangkabau dan Harta Pusakanja," in *Menggali Hukum Tanah dan Hukum Waris Minangkabau*, ed. Mochtar Naim (Padang: Center for Minangkabau Studies Press, 1968), p. 30.

[72] "The Minangkabau adat neither rots in the rain nor cracks in the sun—this saying is very appropriate, for what does not rot in the sun nor crack in the rain is stone. And this stone is now already covered with moss. Let us put this stone into a museum so that it is stored and is always valuable. There in the museum, there are many friends of this stone in various forms." Hamka, "Adat Minangkabau Menghadapi Revolusi," reprinted in *Islam dan Adat Minangkabau* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1984), p. 49. The passage is also translated and discussed in Kato, *Matriliny and Migration*, p. 231. During the Revolution Hamka

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the inspiration for writing the earlier tract, and in the process reveals that even by 1968 he still finds Minangkabau obsolete:

> At the end of 1945, in the thick of our Revolution I moved from Medan to my home village. I took a car from Bukittinggi to the village. After leaving the city limits, on my right was the district of Kapas Pandji. There I saw a *Rumah Gadang Adat* Minangkabau that had been divided into two parts. On the property on one side had been built a modern building. And on the remaining half the *Rumah Gadang* still stood, with just two spires facing the south, because the two that face north had already collapsed.
>
> This was the initial inspiration for my writing the book *Minangkabau Adat Faces a Revolution*. I saw that *Adat* had already changed, and no one should be blamed for this change. When that much water passes through a stream, the banks must be reshaped. I praise *Adat*, I love the Inheritance system, but Minangkabaus themselves could no longer ride in that ark. Gradually they exited. There is no longer the strength of the *Ninik-Mamak* [elders and adat authorities] or the *Cerdik-Pandai* [people with skills and knowledge] to hold it together. If for example in one place a *Rumah Gadang* has already been divided, with one of the sections becoming a building specifically designated for a "husband" [urang sumando] who already acts independently, then the *Ninik-Mamak* or elder [Tungganai] of that clan can no longer stand in his way. And the sign of this change is that the husband already acts to control his child, although the child is the nephew [kemenakan] of another.[73]

When *Adat Minangkabau Menghadapi Revolusi* was written, Hamka's father had recently died. The Japanese had surrendered. Hamka himself was stumbling and vulnerable, so closely associated with the Japanese that throughout *Kenang-kenangan Hidup 3* he refers to *himself* as "Hamka-San." During the Revolution, following the departure of the Japanese, Hamka remained locally active in West Sumatra, writing and speaking throughout Minangkabau. But he was never to regain the star status he

generated a small income from the sale of this pamphlet; however all secondary sources seem to rely on a 1963 reprint rather than the original.

[73] "Pada achir tahun 1945, seketika sedang hebatnja Revolusi fisik kita saja pindah dari Medan kekampung halaman. Saja naik oto dari Bukittinggi menudju kampung. Setelah keluar dari batas kota, disebelah kanan saja adalah Nagari Kapas Pandji. Disana saja lihat sebuah Rumah Gadang Adat Minangkabau jang dipotong djadi dua. Ditanah jang separo telah didirikan sebuah gedung baru tjara sekarang. Dan separo jang tinggal masih berdiri Rumah Gadang, gondjongnja tinggal dua jang menghadap ke Selatan, sebeb dua jang menghadap ke Utara telah diruntuhkan.

"Inilah asal mulanja menimbulkan inspirasi saja menulis buku *Adat Minangkabau Menghadapi Revolusi*. Saja melihat bahwa Adat telah berobah, dan tidak ada orang jang patut disalahkan lantaran perobahan ini. Air telah gadang sebeb itu tepian telah pasti berobah. Saja memudji Adat, saja mentjintai sistim Harta Pusaka, tetapi Anak Minang sendiri sudah tidak dapat lagi menumpangi bahtera itu. Dengan berangsur mereka keluar dari dalamnja. Tidak ada lagi kekuatan Ninik Mamak atau Tjerdik Pandai jang bisa menahan. Kalau misalnja disatu tempat sudah ada Rumah Gadang jang dipotong dua, dan jang sepotong sudah djadi gedung tandanja 'urang sumando' sudah bertindak sendiri, dan Ninik-Mamak atau Tungganai dalam kaum itu tidak dapat menghalanginja lagi. Dan tandanja siurang sumando telah bertindak menguasai anaknja, meskipun anaknja itu kemenakan urang lain." Hamka, "Adat Minangkabau dan Harta Pusakanja," p. 41.

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enjoyed during the Japanese occupation.[74] Hamka emerged undistinguished but alive, and not condemned.

In his autobiography Hamka grants himself a last moment of approval and joy before his fall from glory. It is in the political and social limbo of East Sumatra—before the Japanese surrender and before he relocated to Minangkabau—that Hamka again encounters his father. He had just finished writing the manuscript for *Ajahku* when he had the dream: He is in his study on Jl. Japaris in Medan. His father and an old friend, Dr. H. Abdullah Ahmad, appear. They seem happy, and ask to see the text that Hamka keeps in his desk.

> He went to the small cabinet that I had pointed to [*tunjukkan*], and truly within that small cabinet were those drafts from earlier in the day. He took them out, and his friend Dr. H. Abdullah Ahmad sat in my work-chair, facing my desk. He flipped through the draft, and his face was joyful. Then he said to his friend Dr. H. Abdullah Ahmad, "Ah, just look, you're also mentioned in here."
>
> Those drafts, that I had written in Arabic script, were then taken by Dr. H. Abdullah Ahmad who flipped through then with a placid expression. After that he took them and returned them to the small cabinet, where they had been kept originally, and closed everything up . . . both of their faces appeared glad, and I awoke . . .[75]

Reminding himself of the auspicious role that dreams play in Islamic hagiography, Hamka reasons that this is a "'*mimpi' jang baik*" and grants the dream much credence. Here, at last, Hamka begins to build something that he can point to (*tundjukkan*). His family history, disconnected from a *rumah*, is now bound up in texts. Several days later the Japanese surrender. His second "good dream" comes on December 18, 1949. *Ajahku* is still unpublished—put on hold during the independence struggle—and Hamka is preparing to leave Padang the following morning, to visit his father's grave in Jakarta.

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[74] The 1,500 page official history, *Sejarah Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia di Minangkabau 1945-1950* (Jakarta, Badan Pemurnian, vol. 1 1978/vol. 2 1981) grants Hamka a minor role in a constellation of *many* major and minor figures, treating him more as a chronicler than an actor. Recall that Hamka was a propaganda showboat for the Japanese. On the anniversary of the Japanese invasion and the founding of "New Sumatra" (March 13, 1943) the Japanese organized a massive series of rallies. The biggest, June 20's *Rapat Besar Kaum Muslimin Sumatera Baru* in Medan, saw sixty thousand bused in. "Leading *kerajaan ulama* also spoke, but it was Hamka who responded most enthusiastically and became the star of the propaganda film the Japanese made about the rally." Reid, *The Blood of the People*, p. 114. But it is also true that official histories have relied on *Ajahku* and *Kenang-Kenangan Hidup* for information, so it was Hamka who helped to write *himself* out of this history.

[75] "Beliaupun pergilah kealmari ketjil jang saja tundjukkan itu, dan memang sebenernja didalam almari ketjil itulah konsep itu saja letakkan sedjak siang harinja. Beliau keluarkan, dan temannja Dr. H. Abdullah Ahmad telah duduk kekursi tempat saja mengarang, menghadapi medja saja. Konsep itu beliau balik-balik, mukanja kelihatan girang. Lalu katanja kepada temannja Dr. H. Abdullah Ahmad; 'Ah, tjobahlah lihat, tuanpun tersebut pula didalamnja,' kata beliau.

"Konsep itu, jang saja tulis dalam huruf Arab lalu diambil pula oleh Dr. H. Abdullah Ahmad sambil dibalik-baliknja pula dengan muka djernih. Sesudah itu beliau ambil kembali dan beliau letakkan kedalam almari ketjil itu, ditempatnja semula, dan ditutupkannja baik-baik..., muka beliau keduanja kelihatan girang, dan sajapun tersentak . . ."

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> He [Hamka's father] wore a white robe, a beautifully embroidered turban, his index finger pointing left and right [*telundjuknja menundjuk-nundjuk kiri kanan*]. His words were clear: "Wherever you are, still truth should be upheld!"[76]

With these final words and final two pages of *Ajahku*, Hamka is at last freed from Minangkabau. Haji Rasul, dressed like an Arab scholar or Padri, provides a floating index—*telundjuknja menundjuk-nundjuk*—and Hamka can divorce himself from the frail support of his native village. He now has a family grave in Java that he can visit and an immovable plot of land to which he may point. Unbound from the "formative" culture of his childhood, Hamka can at last act independently. Hamka is exculpated. The foibles of his past are exorcised along with the land of Minangkabau. Here *Kenang-kenangan Hidup 4: Kewadjiban memanggil* (Obligation calls) again joins and completes this narrative of *Ajahku*. It is the end of 1949, and Hamka prepares to leave Minangkabau and his family. Now, Jakarta is the burial place of his father, and the city where he will take up his father's mantle. In a poem to his children, Hamka becomes the departing "*Ajahmu*" (*KKH4*, pp. 177-82). Before the second dream, still cowed and disorientated, Hamka had asked himself, "and me, where is my place?" (*dan saja dimanakah tempat saja*?) (p. 185) Yet in a final poem addressed to Sukarno-Hatta, and dated December 28, 1949 (on December 27 the Netherlands formally transferred sovereignty to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia), Hamka signs "*Djakarta jang pulang.*" (p. 191) He is in Jakarta, he has had the dream. Hamka is "home."

Home: Hamka and Rusydi in Jakarta

Hamka died in Jakarta in 1981. His son Rusydi immediately published *Pribadi dan Martabat Buya Prof. Dr. Hamka* (Buya Prof. Dr. Hamka: The Person and His Values). Rusydi was and is an editor of the flagging journal *Panji Masyarakat*, and did not inherit his father's tremendous talents and ambition. *Pribadi dan Martabat* is not another *Ajahku*—in it, Rusydi does not try to reconstruct his identity and relationship with his father. Rather the book is remarkable for the window it provides onto the home and family Hamka built in Jakarta.

Rusydi, in the chapter "Obat Hati Ayah dan Obat dari Anak" (Remedy for Father, Remedy from Children), describes Hamka's relationship with his two wives. His first wife was Ummi Hajjah Siti Raham, and they were together forty-three years until she died in 1972. Rusydi recounts the history made familiar in *Kenang-kenangan Hidup*. In 1927, Hamka returned from Mecca and found his father in a crisis: his house in Padang Panjang had been damaged in the earthquake, and the communists within the Sumatera Thawalib had driven him from his school. But Haji Rasul was glowing with pride for a son who had gone to Mecca without burdening his family, "According to father [Hamka], for as long as he had lived that moment when he returned from Mecca was the first time he received his father's affection. Both son and father had become distant because of the parents' divorce, and both parents had each remarried and had children with a different husband and wife."[77]

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[76] "Beliau memakai djubah putih, serban diikatan indah, telundjuknja menundjuk-nundjuk kiri kanan. Djelas kata-kata beliau; 'Dimana-manapun, namun kebenaran hendaklah ditegakkan!'" Hamka, *Ajahku*, pp. 217, 218.

[77] "Menurut cerita ayah, selama hidupnya saat kembali dari Mekkah itulah dia baru mendapatkan kasih sayang ayahnya. Kedua anak dan ayah itu telah lama berjauhan berhubeng perceraian ayah bunda, dan

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Rasul's brother approaches his nephew, expressing the family's wish that Hamka soon marry. A marriage, he says, will be *obat* (medicine) for Hamka's father. So on April 5, 1929 Hamka (then 21) and Ummi (then 15) were married. They had been engaged (*ditunangankan*) while Hamka was in Mecca, and Hamka agrees to the arrangement for the sake of his father's emotional health. Although Hamka confesses that over time he grows to be thankful for his family's choice, at first he was bitter. Compare this to the passages from *Agama dan Perempoean* quoted at the beginning of this essay, and the novella *Di Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah*.

After Ummi's death in 1972 the entire family is in deep mourning. In grief Hamka feels that he too will die soon, and refuses to re-marry. But his children are concerned, and decide that he needs a companion. One year after Ummi's death, Hamka marries Hajjah Siti Khadijah, a Ceribon woman roughly the same age as Ummi. It is at this point that Hamka tells his children, "If the late Ummi had been 'medicine for my father's heart,' because I married her when my father was experiencing deep sorrow, then *ibu* Khadijah is 'medicine for my children's hearts,' because of our sorrow at Ummi's passing."[78] Throughout his life, Hamka rejected the polygyny that had characterized the *ulama* of Minangkabau. And even as a widower, he refused to re-marry casually. Hamka's Jakarta *rumah* had no *induang* (matriline), but rather was built around the figure of a strong wife and *ibu*.

Rusydi takes particular joy in describing his father as a domestic champion. He gave sanctuary to a (Muslim) Betawi woman who was seeking protection from her (Christian) Batak husband. Hamka turns his *tongkat* (walking cane, but also the term for the support pillars of a Rumah Gadang) on both marauding Bataks and proselytizing Seventh-Day Adventists. In the chapter "Problem Metropolitan" Hamka's house is a fortress of morality, with supplicants coming for advice and sanctuary.[79] Unlike *Ajahku*, there is no ambiguity in *Pribadi dan Martabat*. The home in Jakarta is a Palladium in which the family can do no wrong nor come to any harm. Leaving the moral uncertainly of Minangkabau and the political insecurity of Medan, Hamka " . . . could only make a home (*rumah-tangga*) when in 1950 he moved to Jakarta."[80]

Epilogue: Museums

All of Hamka's troubles were not neatly packed away with *Kenang-kenangan Hidup* and *Ajahku*. In 1952, he took a trip to the United States of America, visiting Hollywood (where he hunted down movie star Piper Laurie), Ithaca, and the American

masing-masing telah kawin dan beranak pula dengan suami dan isteri yang lain." H. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat Buya Prof. Dr. Hamka*, 2nd. ed. (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983), pp. 20, 21.

78 "Kalau Almarhumah Ummi dulu dikatakan sebagai 'obat hati ayahku,' karena aku mengawininya saat ayahku dalam dukacita. Maka ibu Khadijah ini adalah 'obat hati anak-anakku,' karena dukacita kami ditinggalkan Ummi." H. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat Buya Prof. Dr. Hamka*, pp. 34, 35. According to *adat*, a new wife should be provided within a hundred days of the death.

79 A Minangkabau woman who "prostituted" her daughters is scorned. Hamka gives marital advice to an amoral mixed-race couple; he attacks "poligami" and a husband who conveniently marries a young wife. H. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat Buya Prof. Dr. Hamka*, pp. 14, 119, 123.

80 "Terutama di zaman muda tatkala baru membina rumah-tangga sampai tahun 1950 pindah ke Jakarta." H. Rusydi, *Pribadi dan Martabat Buya Prof. Dr. Hamka*, p. 91.

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South.[81] He goes to the National Museum in Chicago, where the Southeast Asian section has a special exhibit on Minangkabau. Hamka finally encounters his museum of *adat*. From the section "'Minangkabau' di Chicago":

> Afterward, I checked out the collection of our primitive handicrafts. I was truly amazed to see the crafts they had assembled. Because many of those things are no longer found in Minangkabau itself. I can truly declare that the Minangkabau exhibit in Chicago is more complete than the museum in Bukittinggi. Many of those items, the under-thirty *pemuda* generation would not know their names. [Of the long list of terms, those I can define all refer to tools and cookware][82]

Hamka is frustrated that there is no representation of Minangkabau Islam in the exhibit. He then muses on the significance of storing Minangkabau in Chicago, as the tourists pass through . . .

> Many of these heirlooms, they are no longer part of society. They're stashed in Chicago. If a Minangkabau went there, perhaps many of the things would be unknown. So for a long time I stood there, looking at those many heirlooms. Preserved, to add to the pool of knowledge on the lives of ancient and primitive tribes. I hung around, looking at all those historical things. I wasn't stalling with the wish to turn back the hands of time and history, or to call Tjindur Mato home to the earth... it was not for that.
>
> Hundreds of people passed through, entered and then left, and many took note of the Minangkabau exhibit, but of course with less interest than me. Thank God that among all of those people, not one knew how long I had been standing there, because I had been born in the exhibited region.
>
> Because if they had asked, "Does this still exist?" Of course I would answer, "Still!"
>
> What would I answer if they asked, "Where's the bathroom located?"
>
> What would I answer if they asked, "Where's the plumbing?"
>
> Would I explain that beneath the house there is a place for slaughtering cows, and the stench wafts up into the house?
>
> Thank God I realized, that the Minangkabau being exhibited, it truly was good and beautiful . . . as memories. But times had changed, and not all old things can be kept up anymore. There's already so much that must be kept in a museum, to be viewed and not to be restored. Long before I went to America, before seeing

[81] Hamka, *Empat Bulan di Amerika*, volume 1 of 2 (Djakarta: Tintamas, 1954).

[82] "Setelah itu bertemu barang-barang keradjinan primitef kita. Betul-betul tertjengang saja melihat keradjinan orang mengumpul. Karena banjak diantara barang-barang itu jang di Minangkabau sendiri tidak ada lagi. Saja berani memastikan bahwasanja musium ruang Minangkabau di Chicago lebih lengkap dari musium Bukittinggi sendiri. Banjak diantara barang itu, jang pemuda angkatan baru dibawah 30 tahun barangkali tidak kenal lagi akan namanja. Lesung kintjir, lesung indjak, elu, tampian, pasu, raga, kerandjang, senggan, ketiding, bangkih, sabit padi, tuai." Hamka, *Empat Bulan di Amerika*, p. 30.

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the museum in Chicago, I had already written on this matter. (Adat Minangkabau Menghadapi . . .)[83]

Hamka wanders out into the Chicago sunlight, happy that he is an Indonesian and no longer merely Minangkabau (p. 34). But as his 1968 essay "Adat Minangkabau dan Harta Pusakanja" reminds us, Hamka is never truly free of his childhood home. By the 1970s, rehabilitated politically and at the height of his popularity, Hamka was given to misty-eyed Minangkabauist nostalgia. At a 1970 conference on Minangkabau history in Batusangkar, "he burst into tears saying how glad he was to live long enough to see that the Minangkabau *adat* was still strong and sound."[84] Today, his Sungai Batang "home"—a small single-family house some distance from the site of the original *rumah gadang*—contains a portrait, a library, and a small shrine-like collection of Hamkaiana. In the mythology of modern Islamic populism, Hamka is always remembered as a great preacher, a unifier of the Indonesian *ummat*, and a Minangkabau.

Hamka's *rumah* in Jakarta never fully satisfied his dream of a *rumah tunjuk*.

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[83] "Banjak barang pusaka, tak ada lagi dalam masjarakat. Tersumbul di Chicago. Djika anak Minangkabau baru datang kesana, mungkin banjak barang jang tidak akan dikenalnja lagi. Maka lamalah saja termenung disitu, melihat barang pusaka sebanjak itu. Ditolong orang memeliharanja, untuk menambah Ilmu Pengetahuan tentang kehidupan primitief bangsa-bangsa lama. Saja tertegun melihat barang-barang bersedjarah itu. Bukan tertegun karena hendak menjurutkan djarum sedjarah kebelakang, atau memanggil Tjindur Mato supaja pulang kembali kedunia, bukan.

"Beratus-ratus orang jang lalu lintas, jang masuk dan jang pergi, banjak djuga jang memperhatikan Minangkabau, tetapi tentu sadja tidak sebesar perhatian saja. Sjukarlah diantara orang-orang jang banjak itu, seorangpun tak tahu bahwa saja lama termenung disini, adalah karena saja dilahirkan didaerah jang dipertontonkan ini.

"Sebab kalau mereka bertanja: 'Apakah ini masih ada?' Tentu akan sadja djawab: 'Masih!'

"Apa djawab saja kalau mereka bertanja; 'Mana kakusnja?'

"Apa djawab saja kalau mereka bertanja; 'Mana water-leidingnja?'

"Apakah akan saja terangkan bahwasanja dibawah rumah ini adalah tempat memautkan sapi, dan baunja sampai kerumah?

Sjukurlah saja insaf akan diri, bahwasanja Minangkabau jang dipertontonkan itu, memang bagus dan indah, sebagai kenang-kenangan. Tetapi zaman telah berobah, dan tidaklah segala jang lama dapat dipertahankan lagi. Sudah banjak jang harus disimpan dalam musium, untuk ditengok-tengok dan tidak untuk diulangi kembali. Djauh masanja sebelum saja ke Amerika, sebelum melihat musium di Chicago, soal ini telah saja tulis." Ibid., pp. 32-3.

[84] Kato, *Matriliny and Migration*, p. 243.

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